Islam in Kashmir

(Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century)

ISLAM IN KASHMIR

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Muhammad Ashraf Wani
Professor of History
University of Kashmir
Srinagar

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Preface

The fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries constitute one of the most formative phases in the history of Kashmir in that the period witnessed mass conversion to Islam and the formation of a culture that continues to be normative up to the present times with relatively little changes. The purpose of this book is to analyse the processes that accounted for this momentous religious and cultural change. We also observe that despite having professed Islam, which focuses on cultivating higher moral principles to enable the individual to transcend narrow self-interest, the behaviour of Kashmiri Muslim could not satisfy the medieval *Shariah*- conscious missionary; nor does it satisfy either the present day *dā'i* or, paradoxically, the modern secular humanist. The other religious communities are also face to face with a, more or less, similar crisis. And yet all religious groups conjured up different images for themselves and for each other, leading to the demarcation of sharp boundaries between them. What explanation history has to offer in this regard, the present work attempts to initiate a discussion on it.

These questions have been answered from a variety of angles so as to satisfy a whole community of human scientists. And the book does not only capture the entire gamut of the history of Kashmir between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, but also contains information useful for pre-and-post-conversion Kashmir. Another noteworthy feature of this work is that not only does it take a fresh look at the known sources but also searches out new sources for the first time.

The book originally stemmed from the idea of writing a doctoral thesis on the social history of medieval Kashmir which began taking shape when I joined Kashmir University in 1978 as a Ph.D. student. However, for the paucity of time and space, I submitted the thesis without addressing the question of conversion to Islam. As no social history of the period of my interest could be complete without discussing this religious change, I started pondering on the subject immediately after I had submitted my Ph.D. thesis in 1982. And in 1992 I set out to write a chapter on conversion to Islam for a book on the social history of medieval Kashmir. During the course of my study the subject, however, unfolded itself with so myriad dimensions that it demanded a much wider treatment than could be offered by a chapter of a book dealing with a much larger canvas. Ultimately, the idea of publishing a book on the social history was appropriated by the interest to write an independent monograph on conversion to Islam. And here is the book, which remained my major academic concern for more than a decade.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Prof. A.Q. Rafiqi, Prof. of History, Kashmir University, at whose feet I learnt the first lessons of research methodology, and who groomed and patronized me to reach the present position. While Prof. Rafiqi played the role of an affectionate teacher and a caring father, my mother's unbounded love for me was a great resource at my disposal which helped me to continue my studies following the loss of my father in my childhood. She bore misfortune after misfortune with fortitude, enabling me to continue my studies unhindered. This book is dedicated to her and to Prof. Rafiqi.

I am also indebted to a number of persons for their scholarly assistance and advice at various stages along the way to completing this book. I wish in particular to thank Mr. Muhammad Amin Malik and Dr. G. R. Mir of the Department of English, Kashmir University for going through the first draft of this book and making useful suggestions. I am also thankful to Prof. G. R. Malik and Prof. Shafi Shouq for extending their cooperation in improving the quality of the book. I have been fortunate to have a dedicated researcher, Prof. Muhammad Ishaq Khan as my teacher and colleague. With his zeal for research and talent as a writer *par-excellence* he has been constant source of inspiration for me. My friends, Prof. Mushtaq Ahmad Kaw, Dr. Naseem Ahmad Shah, Dr. G. R. Jan, Dr. Shad Ramzan, Dr. G.N. Khaki and Dr. Irshad Zia helped me in multifarious ways throughout the writing of this book.

It would have been impossible for me to continue my studies after post-graduation had my cousin, Abdul Majid Shah, not provided me moral and material help. Abdul Waheed and Shazia Shafiq, my very dear students, helped me in preparing the index. Shazia also transcribed some of my early hand written drafts.

I am also thankful to Prof. A. M. Mattoo, Prof. Gulshan Majid, Prof. M. M. Masoodi, Prof. Muhammad Akram Mir, Prof. G.Q. Mir, Dr. A. R. Majrooh, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Khan, Dr. Parvaiz, Dr. Muhammad Yusuf, Dr. Farooq Fayaz, Dr. Gh. Hasan Mir, Dr. Nisar Ahmad Mir, Mr. Mehraj ud Din, Mr. Abdul. Rahman Bhat, Mr. Abdul Jabar and Mr Ali Muhammad Shah for exchanging their courtesies. Mr. Javid Ahmad Bhat, Universal Computers, deserves special thanks for formatting the book.

This book would never have seen the light of day bad I not received every possible co-operation from my family. They left me free to dedicate my time to my academic pursuits and inspired me constantly to get published. Aman, Javaid, Fahmida and Aijaz not only took upon themselves the domestic responsibilities despite being busy in studies, but they also showed remarkable perseverance in typing and re-typing many chapters of the book. My wife showed exemplary patience throughout, eagerly waiting to see this book published. The affection I received from Mrs Rafiqi, Sarah Hasan, Sa'ida Rahman, Ghulam Hassan, Abdul Rahman, Abdul Ghani Shah, Ghulam Mobi ud-Din and Fatima, proved a great source of strength at critical times. Last but not least, the little one's, Asifa, Adil and Munis were a source of joy whenever I seemed to lack the nerve to complete the job. May they grow up into good, useful human beings!

Muhammad Ashraf Wani

January, 2004

Introduction

In the twelfth century Kashmir was predominantly a Hindu society with "not a space as large as a grain of sesamum without a *tīrtha,*" according to Kalhana[1]. However, at the turn of the sixteenth century we see Islam having replaced Hinduism as the mass religion of the Valley to the extent that according to the contemporary Sanskrit chronicler, Śrivara, the *brāhmana* boys "are now fond of the Mausulas [Muslims] and are ashamed to follow the Shastra which was followed by their fathers and grand-fathers".[2] Yet, the mid sixteenth century Central Asian conqueror and ruler of Kashmir, Mirzā Haidar Dughlat was stunned to see religious laxity in Kashmir for which he blames the 'Sūfis' who "are forever interpreting dreams, displaying miracles and obtaining from the unseen information regarding either the future or the past".[3] The famous Mughal historian Abu'l Fazl and the Emperor Jahāngīr were struck by the popularity of the indigenous Sūfis called Rishis.[4] The famous French traveller, Bernier, disapprovingly refers to the widespread prevalence of saints' cults and their abuse by the custodians of shrines.[5] The nineteenth century keen observer of Kashmiri society, Walter Lawrence, found Kashmiri Muslims 'Hindus at heart', 'saint worshippers' and lax in religious duties.[6] Tyndale Biscoe, the famous Christian missionary and social reformer who intimately observed the Kashmiri society during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wrote with amazement, "In Kashmir anyway religion and life have nothing to do with one another".[7] Yet, in the late fifties of the twentieth century the famous social anthropologist T. N. Madan found two identities in Kashmir–Kashmiri Muslim identity and Kashmiri Hindu identity, each looking at itself distinct from the other.[8] The present work seeks to analyze and search for the tacit meaning lying beneath the exterior of these phenomena.

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[1] Kalhana, *Rājatarangini* (Eng.tr. M.A. Stein), Book i, 38.

[2] Srivara *Jaina- Rājatarangini* (Eng.tr. J.C. Dutt), pp.319-20.

[3] Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, *Ta'rikh-i-Rashidi* (Ed.N Elias and Eng.tr. Denison Ross), p. 436.

[4] Abu'l Fazl, *A'īn-i-Akbarī* (Eng. tr. Jarrett, revised by J.N. Sarkar), Vol. III, p.355. However Abu'l Fazl wrongly refers the Rishis as brahmans ; Jahāngīr, *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī* (Eng.tr. Rogers and ed. Beveridge) Vol.II, p.149 and note.

[5] Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, ed. Constable and Smith, pp.414-416.

[6] Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 285-286

[7] Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.103.

The Kashmir Valley is one of the most prominent Muslim majority areas in South Asia with not less than 94% of the Muslim population according to the earliest available census reports.[9] This remarkable change in the religious demography of Kashmir occurred especially during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries following mass conversion to Islam. It should be mentioned that except for a few immigrants the predominant majority of Kashmiri Muslims are converts from Hinduism and a thin slice from Buddhism. What is, however, remarkable about the spread of Islam in Kashmir is that conversions did not follow any military occupation of the Valley by the Muslims. Notwithstanding the Muslims having extended their sway upto the territories situated on its northern and western borders in the beginning of the eleventh century and having occupied the whole northern India with the onset of the thirteenth century, Kashmir continued to be ruled by the Hindu *rajas* up to 1339 with a brief intermittent of three years' rule (1320- 1323) of a Buddhist turned Muslim ruler, Rinchana. The Muslim Sultanate, which finally came into existence in 1339, was not, however, the result of any military conquest of Kashmir by the Muslims, but was founded by a Muslim immigrant, Shāh Mīr who, along with many other Muslim settlers from the neighbouring Muslim-ruled territories, had settled in the Valley and shown exemplary qualities of leadership to bail the people out of centuries of misrule and recurrent foreign invasions prompted by the internal chaotic conditions of Kashmir. Such a role as this made Shāh Mīr a popular hero, winning for him titles like 'saviour of the people',[10] and that too from the die-hard *brāhmanas*. To be sure, Shāh Mīr occupied the throne and founded his dynastic rule primarily with the help of local nobility and people at large. Thus conversions to Islam, which took place in Kashmir especially during the reign of the Shāh Mīr dynasty (1339- 1561), were conversions with a difference in the sense that there was no room for using force as the basis of the political authority of early rulers of the dynasty rested on the support of local 'feudal' lords who constituted their nobility, army and bureaucracy; and who were mainly non-Muslims until gradually brought under the

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[8] Madan observed this phenomenon in 1957-58 during the fieldwork for his *Family and Kinship*, though he published his findings in 1972. See his *Family and Kinship: A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir*, 2nd ed. 1989, pp. 5-6

[9] Census of India, 1911, p.88.

[10] Jonarāja *Rājataranginī* (Eng. tr. J.C. Dutt), p.26.

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fold of Islam. It is also worth noting that the first known convert to Islam in Kashmir was none other than the king of the time himself, Rinchana, a Buddhist who was converted by a Sūfi missionary. Clearly, Kashmir figures among those cases of Islamization which do not fall within the category of what is sometimes called " the militant expansion of Islam" or "conversion under Muslim political rule, established by conquest".[11] How can one explain this development? Who converted the people; and how were they converted? This is one of the fundamental questions addressed in this study.

True, no other subject of medieval Kashmir has stimulated as much scholarly attention as Islam has; nevertheless, the indepth study of the complex question, what promoted mass conversion to Islam?, dose not constitute the central focus of interest of any work conducted so for. Prof. Mohibbul Hasan's *Kashmir Under the Sultans* contains some general remarks on conversion to Islam, appended to his essentially political and administrative history. The four pages devoted to the 'Spread of Islam' argue summarily in favour of the social liberation theory of conversion but without elaborating and sufficiently supporting his argument. Dr. R.K.Parmu's *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir* is also primarily a political history of Kashmir covering a long period between 1339 and 1819. Like other dynastic histories, Parmu touches upon the question of conversion mainly in relation to the disposition of the individual rulers, and passingly in the context of 'Islam as a great riddance'[12] and thus juxtaposes the force theory with the social liberation theory. While the force theory is based on Sanskrit chroniclers' selective and projected view of the spread of Islam without subjecting it to historical scrutiny, the social liberation theory is of general nature without being corroborated by the facts. What is, however, more amazing is to see Dr. Parmu, who was fortunate to have association with such illustrious names as Muhammad Habib and Tara Chand,[13] displaying an unprofessional conduct by letting himself overwhelmed by his emotions and dramatizing what is 'remembered' rather than what occurred:

> We cannot, however, exonerate the Hindu community from their cowardice and pusillanimity. Most of them cowardly embraced Islam simply to be allowed to exist in the land of their birth, while a larger number committed suicide. When their religion, culture, life and liberty were in danger, they should have made a common cause and offered united resistance especially when they predominated

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[11] N. Levtzion, "Toward a Comparative Study of Islamization," in N.Levtzion (ed.), *Conversion to Islam*, pp.6-8.

[12] R. K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir* 1320-1819. p.432.

[13] Ibid., Preface.

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> numerically. We are told that only the Brahmans resisted long and in consequence were tormented and tortured with the result that only a couple of thousands were left behind to preserve and maintain ancient religion and traditional culture. Other castes, who outnumbered the Brahman community exceedingly, failed to make any sacrifice. It is a very sad commentary on the state of social and moral degeneration and degradation, which had by this time generally set in the Hindu society in Kashmir.[14]

A.Q.Rafiqi's *Sufism in Kashmir* blazed the trail in making a serious study of Islam in Kashmir. Having sifted and scrutinized a huge mass of manuscript material, he wrote a systematic history of Sūfism in Kashmir from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. And as the canvas of the subject he chose was too vast to be covered in one volume, Prof. Rafiqi appears to have opted to restrict his study to only presenting the history of Sūfism in chronological order and neatly delineating the different *silsilas,* focusing on their respective philosophies and approaches. Hence an in-depth study of conversions is beyond the scope of *Sufism in Kashmir*. Yet, for any student of Islam in Kashmir it is a mine of information and a guide for identifying new vistas of research. Although Prof. Rafiqi presents the facts as they are, the implicit theory which his work elicits commensurates with the view that, "Norms (great traditions) must be carried and at times be imposed by some persons over others; they do not simply exist".[15] He also lends his support to social liberation theory of conversions.

The noted scholar Aziz Ahmad attempted to explain the background of conversion to Islam in his article "Conversion to Islam in the Valley of Kashmir" (Central Asiatic Journal, Vol. XXIII, no 1-2,1979). However, he does not add anything to the conventional view which, without sufficiently corroborating it, attributes the conversion to *brāhmana* exclusivism. He also subscribes to the view of 'forced conversions' won during the reign of Sultān Sikandar; but while referring to the response of Sultān Zain al 'Ābidīn's declaration, permitting the neo-converts to revert to their old faith if they so desired, Aziz Ahmad says, "For a number of causes the elite and its clients, the masses consisting of soldiery drawn from various *jatis* as well as the occupational service *jatis* remained solidly Muslim, despite the Sultān's permission to reconvert to their old religion." If some conversions were won by force during the reign of Sultān Sikandar then why did these converts remain solidly Muslim despite Sultān Zain al 'Ābidīn's permission to reconvert to their old religion? Aziz Ahmad fails to give

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[14] Ibid., pp.129-30.

[15] Dale F. Eickelman, "The Study of Islam in Local Contexts," in K. Ishwaran and Bardwell L. Smith (senior editors), *Contributions to Asian Studies*, Vol.17, entitled *Islam in Local Contexts* edited by Richard C. Martin, p 12.

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a convincing answer to this important question, making his argument of forced conversion untenable. The essay is of general nature, more hypothetical and less factual. Neither had the learned scholar access to all the sources nor could he have claimed to make an in-depth study of the subject in the given paucity of space.

Prof. Rafiqi's *Sufism in Kashmir* seems to have prompted Prof. Ishaq Khan to write *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*: *The Role of Muslim Rishis*. With a pre-occupation to show the Rishis as missionaries of Islam which Prof Rafiqi doubted, Prof. Khan " questioned the role of Sūfis from Central Asia and Persia as being powerful channels of conversion."[16] According to him it was actually the Rishis' liberating role that promoted mass conversions, though the emergence of Rishi movement itself was the result of the tension generated by the "egalitarian and philanthropic teachings of Islam as externalized in Sufi's personality and behaviour."[17] Why does he give more weight to Rishis over the Sūfis as a powerful channel of conversion is the latter's "language barrier which separated them from the masses."[18] It may, however, be genuinely asked that if the language barrier was the only cause that denied the Sūfis the role of being the powerful channel of conversion, then how by Prof. Khan's own admission did "the village watchman, Salat Sanz, the father of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn Rishi [accept] Islam at the hands of Sayyid Husain Simnani"?[19]; and how did, in spite of his 'illiteracy', Nūr al-Dīn have 'extensive discussions' with the "Sūfis like Muhammad Hamadani, Shaikh Sultān, Sultān Ganj Bakhsh and a Sūfi scholar like Haji Adhami?"[20] Besides, if the Sūfis were not as powerful a channel of conversion as the Rishis were, then how could one explain the existence of the huge number of shrines of the Sūfis in different nooks of the Valley, outnumbering those of the Rishis, the people's veneration of the Sūfi saints to the extent of almost deifying them, the recitation of *Aurād-iFattahiyah* in the mosques and *khānoqāhs* of every nook and comer of Kashmir and, last but not least, the living tradition and the unanimous view of our chronicles and hagiographical literature, attributing conversion mainly to the Sūfi saints of Persia and Central Asia. Evidently, Prof. Khan's work has the limitation of a deterministic theory, which emphasizes a single fact at the cost of a multitude of other important facts. Besides, for a proper understanding of the factors that accounted for mass conversion it is necessary to know all known and knowable facts of the "total history"

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[16] Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam : The Role of Muslim Rishis*, p. 224.

[17] Ibid., p. 2.

[18] Ibid., p. 224.

[19] Ibid., p. 64.

[20] Ibid., p. 84.

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of Kashmir at the time it came face to face with Islam; and Prof. Khan's work unfolds little of it. Still, the work is a significant addition to the historical literature on the Rishi movement in particular and Islam in Kashmir in general.

A recent study that particularly seeks to explore the political and social contexts in which conversions occurred is *The State in Medieval Kashmir* by Prof. Rattan Lal Hangloo. Although the study suffers from a lack of sufficient sources and thereby fails to capture the contexts in totality, it is a welcome attempt in that it disputes the stereotypes perpetuated by the Kashmiri Pandit tradition, attributing conversion to force *per se*. Prof. Hangloo argues that the mass conversion to Islam was facilitated by the then "Hindu society and polity" which produced "deteriorating social system, the broadening crisis in economy and political insecurity". According to him "Islam gave a new sense of direction"; and "the spread of Islam ---[appeared] by way of answer and solution to the problems of injustice, disharmony and the people's misery". However, for the paucity of space, Hangloo has not been able to adequately elaborate his thesis. After all, the question of conversion forms only a small chapter of a small book, which summarily touches upon some ambitious themes.

Indeed, conversion to Islam in Kashmir is a complex subject, which no single category of "causes" can help explain. It did not occur suddenly. It took more than three centuries during which far-reaching changes took place in different spheres of life, marking one phase off from the other. Therefore, while searching for the underlying causes of conversion we have to take into account the wide variety of milieus with which these three hundred years were marked. Also, the society of Kashmir was not an undifferentiated mass of people with homogeneous background; and, therefore, the search for a mono-causal approach is like following a mirage. After narrating the history of conversion in Kashmir in chronological order in the Second Chapter, we have devoted the Third and the Fourth Chapters to giving an exhaustive account of the factors that perhaps lay at the root of conversion. The multi-factor analysis has no doubt a limitation of finding oneself in a sea of facts unable to establish a hierarchy of them to make a ladder to rescue oneself from being drowned in it. But, given the complex demands of the complex nature of humans, cultural variability between different groups of the society, heterogeneity in the mental aims and perceptions of people, complexity of social life and the specified situations in which conversions took place, contextual multi-factor analysis seems the only plausible approach as it does not leave a chance for a seemingly lesser important fact to make a hole in the otherwise strong fabric woven of fine threads. Surely the mass conversion to Islam was, like any other historical process, the result of an 'extremely

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complex game of interactions' of different factors, not one of which can pretend to the dominant role.[21] However, as Aaron Gurevich says, "the scholar who recognizes the complexity and contradictions of a historical movement and is satisfied with the presentation of a whole series of factors in the movement, as well as with ascertaining the interaction between the different components of the social structure, such a scholar is particularly susceptible to eclecticism".[22] Undoubtedly. But eclecticism alone can explain the secrets of complex human behaviour, which has never been and can never be automatic. Its chemistry is a chemistry of extremes and, therefore, requires comprehensive treatment for treating its extremes.

The topical question that has become an issue of hot debate among historians, sociologists, social anthropologists, social psychologists and Islamists is: In what form did the social milieu accept Islam expressed by preachers? Did Islam in the process of expansion assimilate converts into a single frame-work of piety? How far does the term 'conversion' apply to the masses since it connotes a total transformation in which a prior religious identity, behaviour pattern and mentality are wholly rejected and replaced by a new one? About Kashmir, at least, there is unanimity among the local sources and the observant visitors that mass conversion to Islam was little more than shifting of camps. Islam was adopted by the masses superficially, mainly its ritual side. The extent to which the mass conversion was purely nominal can be gauged by the fact that even as late as more than three hundred and fifty years after Islam became a mass religion of Kashmir, Walter Lawrence, the meticulous observer of late nineteenth century Kashmir, found the dominant majority of Kashmiri Muslims 'only Musalmans in name':

> The Sunni Musalmans do not strike me as zealous or earnest in the profession of their faith ... I do not base my ideas as to the laxness of Kashmiris in the religious duties merely on my own observations. Holy men from Arabia have spoken to me with contempt of the feeble flame of Islam which burns in Kashmir, and the local Mullahs talk with indignation of the apathy of the people. In times of earthquake and cholera the Kashmiri falls to his prayers and displays a wonderful activity in repairing shrines and mosques, but in fair and easy times he allows the mosque and the shrine to fall into ruins and pays very little attention to the Mullah ... The indifference

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[21] Le Goff, Chartier and Revel (eds.), *La nouvelle histoire*, p.548. Vide, Aaron Gurevich, *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, p.32.

[22] Ibid.

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> shown in the matter of mosques and Mullahs may be accounted for by the fact that the Kashmiri Sunnis are only Musalmans in name.[23]

As a matter of fact, real conversion to Islam remained a far-fetched dream, never realized at any stage of Kashmir history till our own times. Except for a few people, conversion could not prove closer to Nock's definition of conversion as "reorientation of the soul ... a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved",[24] especially when we consider that Islam demands from its adherents a total transformation after its comprehensive code of life and world view. The Fourth Chapter attempts to focus on the factors that impeded meaningful conversion at the mass level.

Although Islam is a religion with a complete scheme for the temporal and spiritual worlds, the European travellers, social scientists, revivalists and political ideologues of different hues have chosen a few rituals and practices of Kashmiri Muslims for their assessment of Islam as observed in Kashmir. While we have also chosen these conventional variables for our evaluation of the subject in question, an attempt has, however, been made in Chapter V to show that what appears to one on a superficial observation 'the impact of Hinduism on the religious behaviour of Kashmiri Muslims,' it was actually the transmission of syncretic Islamic tradition forged in Persian and Central Asian environment long before it was exported to Kashmir. This tradition not only found its expression through the emergence of various Sūfi *silsilas* but it was also promoted through this medium. Since Islam spread in Kashmir by the agency of the Persian and Central Asian Sūfis and as the ancestral belief system of their homeland had accrued from the same sources to which the pre-Islamic beliefs of Kashmir owed their origin and development, the presence of the pre-Islamic survivals or their reformulated version in Kashmiri Muslims' religious life erroneously appears to a casual observer as the impact of local beliefs and practices upon Kashmiri Muslims or as something innovated in Kashmir to meet the local needs and challenges. True, in some cases further compromises were made to meet the demands of compatibility and congruence; but these adjustments too were made within the framework of syncretic tradition worked out in Persia and Central Asia to meet the contemporary requirements. Clearly, by the time Sūfi saints entered the Valley, Sūfism had got ideological basis for organizing mystic life in local contexts. And what seems of crucial significance in this regard is that the deeply embedded local beliefs and practices made the eclectic rather than orthodox version of Sūfism popular in Kashmir.

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[23] Lawrence, *op.cit.*, pp. 285-286

[24] A. D. Nock, *Conversion - The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford 1933), p 7. Vide Levtzion, *Op.cit.*, p.19

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It is, therefore, little wonder to see even the *murīds* of such *ba-Shara'* Sūfis as Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī and Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī giving concessions to the circumstances. With the result that gradually the great tradition represented by *ba-Shara'* Sūfis and the *'ulāma'* and the little tradition of *bai-Shara'* Sūfis and the folk merged into one tradition which is an amalgam of the old and new. Syncretism remained a dominant note of Kashmiri Muslims' religious behaviour for centuries together; but Prof. Khan is right in arguing that 'syncretism or for that matter synthesis is not the culmination of the Islamization process. It is actually a beginning of the movement for the realization of the ultimate'.[25] Thus we see the syncretic religious behaviour of Kashmiri Muslims undergoing changes to distinguish itself from other cultures. The changing behaviour of Rishi movement with the increasing process of Islamization till it completely sloughed off its Hindu-Buddhist practices and merged with the mainstream is a typical example, showing that the nominal mass conversion won to Islam has been in a process of change (though slow and with plurality of time rhythms) for the realization of the ultimate. The 'ultimate' is, however, still a distant dream.

Although the mentality of the Muslim masses remained largely rooted in and informed by the past and the core issues which Islam aims to address, for realizing its vision of a just society, (by cultivating an attitude transcending narrow self interest) remained unrealized, the fact remains that the all-encompassing religion of Islam with a radical agenda and a civilization of its own did, however, create a separate religious identity by substituting the rituals, beliefs, practices and cultural symbols of the past by the new ones either through the process of gradual displacement or Islamization of the old. Clearly, even at the earliest stage of the 'primary milieu of Islam' a radical break with some past beliefs and practices such as idol worship, belief in gods and goddesses, cremation of the dead and the like, was a pre-requisite for entering into the fold of Islam. And gradually a strong Muslim religious identity came into being, buttressed though it was more by rituals, images and cultural symbols than by a new mindset which the great Muslim preachers wanted to create by winning people to Islam. Following the mass conversion to Islam, the Hindu community came to be represented by a single caste of *brāhmanas*. These *brāhmanas* were so emotionally committed to their ancestral belief system that they considered any religious or cultural change not less than a severe 'natural calamity'. Minus giving concessions to pragmatism the *brāhmana* community strictly maintained their faith-oriented beliefs, practices and cultural symbols. All in all, therefore, two religious

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[25] *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 222.

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identities came into being in Kashmir – the Kashmiri Muslim identity and the Kashmiri Hindu identity. The last Chapter focuses on the problem as to how far religion is an important structural basis of identity articulation in the culturally plural social situation of Kashmir. This study, it may be mentioned, is an elaboration of the thesis propounded by the eminent social anthropologist, T. N. Madan in his seminal article, "Religious Identity and Social Structure: The Muslims and Hindus of Kashmir."

As to the periodization indicated in the title of the book, it can be legitimately asked : why study a subject belonging to the history of mentalities or the history of culture characterized by slow rhythms, within a short span of three hundred years which correspond to a political date? The only justification for this chronological bracketing is that these three centuries constitute the most formative phase in the history of Islam in Kashmir, not only because it was during this period that mass conversion to Islam was won but, more so, the culture that came to be forged during the time assumed the position of a normative culture of Kashmir, continuing even up to the present times with relatively little change.

In preparation of this work, I have not only used a variety of conventional sources but also made use, perhaps for the first time, of the non-conventional sources to supplement the conventional evidence or to explore those aspects, which usually elude the historians because the conventional sources are not forthcoming. My being Kashmiri – knowing Kashmiri language, having a sense of locality and possessing requirements of a *participant observer* – proved of immense help to augment my sources of information and to understand and interpret the facts in their proper perspective.

I have drawn upon other intellectual disciplines, which considerably enriched my conceptual and methodological apparatus. The application of inter-disciplinary approach has, on the one hand, clearly demonstrated the inexhaustibility of known sources and, on the other, demanded a search for new sources. However, while I allowed myself to be benefited from the insights of other disciplines, every care has been taken that history never loses its independence and originality.

If this work succeeds in eliciting a fresh opinion I would feel to have been rewarded in my puny efforts.

1: Search for New Sources

The conventional approach to the sources of pre-modern history favoured drawing only on written and archaeological sources that are strictly contemporaneous to one's period of study. This view was as much the result of the illusive belief in the purity and totality of contemporary sources as it was the outcome of the traditional meaning of history with its concern for the short time span, for the individual and the event and for narration rather than interpretation. Both the views now stand sufficiently challenged. The information that has come down to us through conventional sources is defective and suffers from lacunae, not only because much of it has been lost to us accidentally, but, more so, because it is pre-determined for us by the people who were imbued with a particular view and preserved only those facts which supported that view. Thus the facts, which the chroniclers and hagiographers have handed down to us, are not only selective but, above all, they are only a tip of an iceberg of the myriad facts of history. The same is true of the archaeological evidence. The construction of the past, therefore, not only pre-supposes separating chaff from grain but it also entails searching for new sources to get a total view of the past. For obtaining a comprehensive picture of past societies, historians have learnt to throw off the venerated yoke of the conventional approach to sources and have become accustomed to searching for basic materials not only from 'contemporary sources' but also from earlier works or from latter sources and, more importantly, from the corpus of varied non-conventional sources as fieldwork and folklore.

The search for materials beyond the confines of conventional contemporary sources is not making mishmash, confusing and misrepresenting *mise en scene* by drawing on sources of different periods or whose chronology cannot be determined. After all, as rightly emphasized by 'new historiography', history does not consist of a 'single, linear time nor of one single development which is identifiable

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link by chronological link'.[1] Rather, history is a composite of different systems or structures each with its own characteristic rhythm – moving at different speeds according to their own respective dynamics. Some structures are stable, some move slowly and some wear themselves out more quickly. As Ernest Labrousse put it: "the social changes more slowly than the economic, and the mental more slowly than the social".[2] Indeed even the short-term structures or developments find significance only when placed within a more enduring system or structure.[3] Since like any other historical work, human beings are at the centre of our concern and some crucial structures (namely mental framework which profoundly influences the behaviour of the humans) have the element of permanence, and some (as social and cultural patterns) do not break down easily and last for generations together, we chose to throw our doors open to all those sources, regardless of chronological bindings, which help us in providing such stable and strong building blocks that till date no technological and cultural change, not even the modern technological and cultural revolution, could discard them as out of date, non-functional and, therefore, unusable.

As the basic purpose of this Chapter is to highlight the importance of non-conventional sources for constructing the history of Islam in Kashmir, it is understandable to see the following pages focusing only on the 'new sources' and dismissing the known sources with a simple mention without deliberating upon them, though they constitute one of our main sources.

Of the important categories of our sources is the one that sheds light on pre-Islamic Kashmir as Islam did not enter a land that was culturally bare. On the contrary, it confronted long established and deeply entrenched traditions. And the processes embedded in the Valley's pre-Islamic history cast light both on its readiness to change as well as its refusal to make a sudden or complete break with the past. To light up the different corners of the landscape of the history of pre-Islamic Kashmir, there is a variety of sources such as, religious

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[1] Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (eds.), *Constructing the Past*, intr. P. 6.

[2] E.Labrousse, preface to G. Dupeux, *Aspects del'historie sociale et politique du loir-et-cher*, 1848-1914, Paris, 1962, p. xi. Vide Jacques Le Goff, "Mentalities: a history of ambiguities", in Le Goff and Nora, op. cit., p. 167.

[3] For details, see Fernand Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences: The Longue Duree" (tr. Sarah Mathews), in Aymard and Mukhia, *French Studies in History*, vol. I, pp. 69-100.

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literature, miscellaneous works: - stories, poetry, and other forms of literature having social import; travel accounts; the chronicle of Kalhana and the archaeological sources. Of the religious literature *Śaivāgamas, Nīlamatapurāna* and *Lalla Vaakh* are of crucial significance for a student of religious history as they throw significant light on the fluidity of religious milieu, presence of myriad cults, the dominance of *brāhmanas* and the Brāhmanical socio-religious system. The *Lalla Vaakh*- the mystic verses of Lalla, fourteenth-century Śaivite ascetic of Kashmir-testifies to the dynamic rather than static religious milieu of Kashmir. She represents a particular non-conformism which challenged the established Brāhamanic social and religious order. Ratnākara's *Haravijya*, a *mahākāvya* throws valuable light on the pre-Islamic belief system of Kashmir. *Kathāsaritsāgar* of Somadeva written in the late eleventh century is one of the largest collections of stories extant in the world. It is a mine of information about customs, manners, witches, sorcerers and, in fact, on many socio-cultural concepts developed by the society as a whole or by some of its strata. The works of the famous polyhistor of eleventh century Kashmir, Kṣemendra, furnish invaluable information, showing clearly that Kashmir was in the grip of serious social, moral, religious, economic and administrative crises. The compositions of Kṣemendra are too many, but the most important, from our point of view, are *Samayamātrkā, Narmamālā, Deśopadeśa, Kalāvilāsa, Nītikalpataru* and *Lokaprakāśa. Kuttanīmata Kāvya* of Dāmodaragupta, the chief counsellor of King Jayapida deals with the profession of the courtesans. The *Agamadambara* of Jayanta Bhatta contains useful information about religious controversies, particularly the rise of heterodox sects. *Vikramānkadeva Caritam* of Bilhana and *Śrīkanthacarita* of Mankha also provide some important references for understanding historical processes operating in Kashmir on the eve of the introduction of Islam. The accounts of the famous Chinese travellers – Hieun Tsang and Ou-Kong – show, besides other things, the positive correlation between the personal religion of the rulers and the religion of the masses. As the rulers of Kashmir belonged to the Hindu faith at the time they visited Kashmir, Hinduism, according to them, was the mass religion of Kashmir; and Buddhism, which for centuries formed the main faith of the Valley, was marginalized by the beginning of the seventh century. However, according to these pilgrims, the reverence for Buddhism had not vanished from the hearts of the people, notwithstanding the religious changes. The Korean pilgrim Hui Chao's record on Kashmir throws a significant light on state patronage to religion and 'feudal' social formation according to which, along with the land, the inhabitants of villages were also transferred to the landed beneficiaries. Al-Birūni's *Kitāb fī Tahqīq ma li'l Hind*, popularly known as *Kitāb al-Hind* refers to the moral bankruptcy that had crept in the religious elite and the pressures Kashmir was facing owing to the occupation of the Valley's neighborhood by the Muslims. Marco Polo mentions the existence of Muslims in Kashmir who acted as butchers for the Hindus. He also refers to a section of renouncers and the widespread practice of witchcraft in Kashmir. The famous history of Kashmir, *Rājataranginī* by the celebrated historian Kalhana, though basically a political chronicle, provides passing references on varied aspects which open a window through which one perceives, however dimly, some of the important strands of the 'total history' of Kashmir at the time Islam penetrated into the Valley. The archaeological sources, particularly the temple-ruins, sculptures and coins answer many questions that strike a student interested in understanding religious changes in Kashmir.

When did Islam start penetrating in Kashmir? What were the main stages of conversion? How long did it take to convert Kashmir into a mass Muslim society? Who were the chief agents of conversion? Where from did they come? How and why did they succeed in winning conversions? What means and methods did they adopt for rooting of Islam? Was conversion a sudden and total transformation or was it a slow and gradual process? What factors came in the way of winning meaningful conversion? Which type of Sūfism found favour with the local environment? What accounted for a typical ritual behaviour and religious mentality of Kashmiri Muslims? How for did the religious and cultural needs of the masses influence the 'learned culture'? To what extent did the mass acceptance of Islam and retention of Hinduism by most of the *brāhmanas* account for separate religious identities? And what was the basis of this identity articulation? For answering these questions one has to rely on both the conventional and the non-conventional sources. By conventional sources we mean chronicles, hagiographic literature, poetry and archeological sources, which have been routinely used by the historians so far. However, what is new in this regard is that we put some new questions to these known categories of sources. The main works that help us in answering these questions, of course, in conjunction with the sources mentioned above and the non-conventional sources, are those written during the Sultanate period or immediately after that. In this regard mention may be made of political chronicles, namely, *Rājataranginī* of Jonarāja, *Jaina- Rājataranginī* of Śrivara, *Rājataranginī* of Śuka, *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* of Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, *Bahāristān-i Shāhi* (anonymous), *Tārīkh-i Kashmir* of Haidar Malik, *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, of Emperor Jahāngīr, *Tabaqāt-i Akbarī* of Nizām al- Dīn Ahmad; the famous gazetteer of information on medieval India, *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* of Abu'l Fazl; political-cum-religious sources, viz, *Tārīkh-i Kashmir* by Sayyid 'Ali and *Wāqi'at-i Kashmir* by Muhammad A'zam; religious literature, namely, *Dhakhīrat al Mulūk* and other works of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, *Khulāsat al- Manāqib* of Ja'far Badakhshī, *Manqabat al- Jawāhir* of Haidar Badakhshi, *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb* (anonymous), *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, *Rishi nāma*, *Qaisdai Lāmiyya* and *Risāla-i Gusliyya Yūsuf Shāhī* of Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Tadhkirat al- 'Ārifīn* of Mulla 'Ali Raina, *Chilchilat al- 'Ārifīn* of Ishaq Qari, *Rāhat al- Tālibīn* of Hasan Qārī, *Hidāyat al- Mukhlisīn* of Haidar Tulmulī, *Tadhkirat al- Murshid* of Khwāja Miram Bazāz, *Nūr nāma* of Bābā Nasīb, *Asrār al- Abrār* of Bābā Dā'ūd Mishkātī, *Khawāriq al- Sālikīn* of Mulla Ahmad Sabūr and *Fathāt-i Kubrāviyya* of 'Abd al Wahāb Nūrī; archaeological sources particularly the *khānaqāhs*, mosques and tombs of the period and documents, namely, *Khat-i Irshād* and *Waqf-nāma* of Khānaqāh-i Mu'alla. The didactic poetry of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn is a very valuable source on the popular Rishi Movement. However, it passed from mouth to mouth for a long time till it was rescued from falling into oblivion, first by Bābā Nasīb in the early seventeenth century (who, however, recorded only a few of the Shaikh's verses) and then by Mīr 'Ābdullāh Baihaqī, Mulla Bahā al-Dīn Mattu and Bābā Khalīl and Bābā Kamāl in the nineteenth century.

Gathering History From The Ground

Notwithstanding the significance of the above contemporary works as sources of information, it would, however, be sheer fantasy to imagine that they tell us all that we require for constructing different frontiers of the 'Islamization' in Kashmir. No less, and sometimes more, revealing evidence comes from the non-conventional sources—religious geography, legends, myths, memories, beliefs, practices, language, proverbs, idioms, personal names, surnames and place names. For tapping these new sources village to village and *muhalla* to *muhalla* fieldwork, talk with the elders and, in fact, first hand knowledge of Kashmiri culture is a prerequisite. Since the use of these sources has not yet been considered seriously for writing the history of Kashmir and, as we have used them frequently where the contemporary evidence is not forthcoming or where passing or circumstantial evidence needs further substantiation, it is in place to examine briefly the significance of each of these new categories of sources to illustrate their respective import.

Fieldwork and Oral History

No study on Islam in Kashmir can be complete without getting insights from the present religious geography of Kashmir as much of the sacred geography of Kashmir that meets the eye today is the legacy of the past – the past which Islam encountered and the past which came to be forged during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Notwithstanding the mass conversions, Kashmir is still studded with ancient *tīrthas* and *aśthāpanas* which continue to attract the devotees. This sacred geography throws valuable light on the religious beliefs and practices of pre-Islamic Kashmir and the religious freedom enjoyed by the non-Muslims during the Muslim rulers. The Muslim shrines– tombs, symbolic tombs, *khānaqāhs*, "brotherhoods of trees" with enclosures – mosques, graveyards, place-names after saints or shrines and spatial distribution of religious elite, whose settlements in Kashmir can be traced back to our period, help us in understanding the extent to which Islamic movement penetrated in Kashmir, the methods and means adopted by it to achieve its objective, its successes and failures and the impact of Persian and local traditions on Kashmiri Muslim religious behaviour.

The Middle Ages was a period when, as Aaron Gurvich rightly says, " the Book was dominant only in one 'elitist' hypostasis of culture".[4] The great mass of people being illiterate, educated people reflected a particular cultural situation: "written culture, the culture of books, existed as a kind of oasis among oral communication systems and oral translations of cultural values".[5] Considering this cultural situation of the Middle Ages which in fact continued in Kashmir up to quite recent times and continues down to our times especially with regard to the religious matters, oral history assumes a special significance for the one who is interested in constructing the religious history of Kashmir. This being the case, we conversed with the people and considered various forms of oral tradition.

When we talk to the Muslims of different areas/localities of Kashmir and enquire from them who converted their ancestors to Islam, pat comes the reply, such and such a saint. And the saint that is referred to is the one whose tomb or *khānaqāh* or mosque or symbolic tomb forms the main shrine of the area / locality. His *'urs* is celebrated, *khatam* recited, intercessory role invoked, relics are revered and faces smeared with the holy dust of the sacred precincts of his shrine, votive

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[4] Aaron Gurevich, *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, p.50

[5] Ibid

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rags(*d'ash*) tied and *nazar u niyaz* to it paid to fulfill the wishes. To the second question: how they were converted by the saint, the general response projects the saints as superhumans invested with miracles before which the feats of the equally superhuman *gurus* could not withstand. Beyond words, a saint is understood in terms of his power rather than in terms of his ethical example.

The living tradition not only supports the literary evidence, which attributes the conversion to the saints, but also presents a live picture of it. Each locality reveres its own saint alongwith his *pīr* if he happened to have one. The presence of the shrines of the saints in different parts of the Valley not only reminds us of but also underlines the importance of the policy adopted by the master saints in dividing the Valley into different zones and distributing them among their *murīds* for preaching and teaching of Islam. For the historian the problem is not whether the miracles attributed to the saints were genuine or fictional. What is important is that the Kashmiri society ascribed great significance to them. That is why of the other myriad facts of the missionary activities of the saints, tales of their *karāmāt* (miracles) have been eagerly and avidly listened to, remembered, thought useful and important enough to record, passed on through oral tradition and incorporated into the store of knowledge. That the belief in the miraculous powers of the saints figures among the fundamental facts of Kashmiri culture upto our own times testifies to its importance as an effective means used by the saints and, more so, by their *murīds* for mobilizing people around Islam. Hence the belief can not be dismissed as something outside history and thereby unworthy to be studied.

While the Muslim tradition attributes the conversion to Sūfi saints, the Pandit tradition ascribes it to force *per se*. Talk to the Pandits and ask them how Islam spread in Kashmir; they will say 'by force'; and Sultān Sikandar came to symbolize it. This reveals certain facts not only of the present but also of the past of Kashmir as it is a continuity of the past tradition.[6] It shows the conceit and the die-hard attitude of the *brāhmana* leadership, never ready to accept any limitation in their socio-religious system albeit it had alienated the masses as well as a section of the intellectuals of the community.[7] Right from the days of conversion up to our own times they remained cautious not to mention any such incident of conversion which would in any way undermine the

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[6] For details about the intriguing silence of the *brāhmana* elite of the Sultanate period over the voluntary conversion, see infra, pp.111-113, 135

[7] Infra, pp.90-96, 151-54, 211-16.

Brāhmanical religion. They either harped on force or economic motivations behind the conversion. Secondly, it substantiates the written evidence regarding the growing impact of Islam and resultantly the growing tendencies among the *brāhmana* youth to change after the 'reference religion'– Islam,[8] making the Pandit elders cultivate cynicism among their children against Islam by dinning into their ears that Islam had spread in Kashmir through forced conversion. The tradition passed on from generation to generation more through the word of mouth than in writing till it reached our own times and was recorded recently in legendary history.[9] The tradition also testifies to the continuity of the mindset of the *brāhmana* community, which did not compromise with conversion, creating a hiatus in the emotional bonds between the two communities. The Pandit tradition has also been tapped by Henny Sender[10] and Kusum Pant;[11] and their findings are quite identical with those of ours.

Fieldwork is more rewarding for an appreciation of the nature and levels of conversion, the meaning of Islam and the basis of Muslim identity in the local context. To be sure, this is the only means that provides us a real and tangible picture of the beliefs, practices, rituals, ceremonies, life style and behaviour of Kashmiri Muslims which the 'contemporary sources' have generally taken for granted and left out. The information thus gathered does not only depict the picture of Islam in contemporary Kashmir, but also sheds light on medieval Kashmir as the Muslim culture in Kashmir (if we ignore the recent puritan trends owing to the revivalist movements, influencing, however, only a small section of the people yet) is the legacy of the culture established in the Valley between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Although most of the facts about the Muslim culture and Islam as practised in Kashmir remain yet to be documented, some important information has been preserved by Walter Lawrence in his *The Valley of Kashmir*, Tyndal Biscoe in *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, Sant Ram Dogra in *Code of Tribal Customs in Kashmir*, T.N. Madan in his article, "Religious Ideology and Social Structure : The Muslims and Hindus of Kashmir" and Muhammad Altaf Husain Ahangar in his *Customary Succession Among Muslims*. In order to understand and appreciate the changes

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[8] Srivara, pp. 319-320.

[9] See, for example, Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*.

[10] Henny Sender, *The Kashmiri Pandits: A Study of Cultural Choice in North India*, pp. xvi-xvii, 8-9, 13-14, 16.

[11] Kusum Pant, *The Kashmiri Pandit: Story of a Community in Exile*, pp.11-12.

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brought about by Islam, the nature of conversion and the formation of religious identities, it is also necessary to know the specific features of the culture of the Kashmiri *brāhamanas* popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits. In this regard, besides the above works, Anand Koul's, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, T. N. Madan's *Family and Kinship: A Sudy of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir* and S.N. Pandit's *Kashrin Battan Hind Rasm Ta Revaj* provide a valuable information.

Language:

As is true of any other language of any linguistic cultural region, the Kashmiri language is a rich repository of the Valley's past. Speaking in the context of our immediate purpose, it throws light on the dynamic character of Kashmiri society all through its history, domination of Brāhamanism in Kashmir prior to Islam, the linguistic cultural region which acted as the immediate source of Islam in Kashmir, the degree to which Persian and Central Asian cultures influenced the religious behaviour of Kashmiri Muslims and, last but not least, it shows that Islam entered Kashmir as a civilization-building religion.

Needless to say, the Kashmiri language is predominantly a loan-oriented language as its word fund is derived from a variety of sources.[12] It not only shows that the Kashmiri language evolved, changed, grew and developed on account of cultural diffusion, but, more importantly, it illustrates the dynamic character of Kashmiri society which always showed readiness to change on having come face to face with new cultures. Until the penetration of Islam in the Valley, the Kashmiri language, which according to Grierson has Dardic basis, was powerfully influenced by Sanskrit in particular and Hebrew, Iranian, Central Asian and many other languages (spoken in the territories neighbouring the Valley) in general.[13] Although the archaeological and written sources refer to the political occupation of Kashmir by many Indian, Greek, Iranian and Central Asian rulers before the foundation of the Sultanate, the language helps us to know that the Valley did not only undergo frequent political changes but it also underwent frequent cultural changes following the change of rulers and contacts with other cultures. True, the history of the Kashmiri language before the coming of Islam is a running tale of culture changes Kashmiri society went through from time to time. Having been habitual to change along the changing currents as shown by the Kashmiri language, it is an important source indicating that Kashmiri society was fated to respond to new changes in the same manner and for the same reasons it had responded to the changing times during its long career in the past.

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[12] George Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*. Vol VIII, part II, pp. 235-253; Khawaja Nazir Ahmad, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*; Aziz Kashmiri. *Christ in Kashmir*; Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, *A Fresh Approach to the History of Kashmir*; Nazir Ahmad Malik, *Kashmiri Sarmaya-e-Alfaz Ke Sar Chashme*; Gulshan Majid, "Iran and Kashmir: A Study in Cultural Links," in M.M.Masoodi (ed.) *Contribution of Kashmir to Persian Language and Literature*, pp. 1-26.

[13] Ibid.

Further, the study of Kashmiri makes it abundantly clear that Brahmanism was the dominant tradition of Kashmir for a considerably long period and it continued to be so till it encountered Islam, for without any exaggeration every second word of the present Kashmiri language is of Sanskrit origin, though more than six hundred years have elapsed since Sanskrit lost the position of being the official language and the language of the mass religion. George Grierson, who does not regard Kashmiri as a Sanskritic form of speech, however, admits that "the greater part of its vocabulary is now of Indian origin and is allied to that of the Sanskrit Indo-Aryan languages of northern India".[14]

Apart from having the predominance of words having Sanskrit origin, the Kashmiri language is considerably influenced by Persian. If every second word of Kashmiri has Sanskritic origin, the third one is a Persian loan-word, though according to Prof. Shamas al-Dīn Ahmad fifty-eight to sixty per cent Kashmiri words are Persian loan-words.[15] What is more important, the Kashmiri language reached the present literary status because of the inspiration it received from Persian. It developed on the pattern of Persian poetic genres: *ghazl*, *qasīdah*, *mathnavī*, *rubā'ī* and *marsiya*. Kashmiri poets not only borrowed poetic genres, words, terms, subject matter and themes from the Persian poets, they even imitated their imagery and metaphors.[16] It will not be, therefore, an exaggeration to call the present Kashmiri language, *Persianate by extension*, the term used by Marshall Hodgson for those cultural traditions that reflected Persian inspiration.[17] Why did Persian make such a profound influence upon Kashmiri? Why not Arabic? The reason is not difficult to seek if we consider that Islam did not come to Kashmir directly from Arabia; it came via Iran and Central Asia through Persian, and Central Asian preachers whose mother tongue was Persian and, therefore, taught in this language. Further, the books they taught, to impart religious and secular education, were mainly written in Persian by the scholars of Persianate zone.[18] Thus *Farsi* (Persian) assumed the position of religious language and a window on the spiritual world for those who yearned for spiritual attainment. It is also a fact that Persian would not have become so popular in Kashmir without having been made the official language by the Sultāns – the position which it enjoyed up to 1885. This made the experts of the language a 'reference group' and considerably helped in creating an ambience favourable to Islam.

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[14] Grierson, op. cit., Vol. III. part, II, p. 253.

[15] Shamas al-Dīn Ahmad, *Shah-i-Hamdān: Hayāt our Kārnāmay*, p. 321.

[16] Exactly after the Persian poets, to the Kashmiri poets rose is used for beautiful lover/beloved; moon for beautiful face; cypress tree for a straight beautiful figure; singing of nightingale (bulbul) a moving spirit, a passionate and helpless love of bulbul and suicidal fluttering of the moth about the candle for a lover to whom there is no better way to express his love than to sacrifice his life while making circumambulation of his beloved and to get absorbed in her. Similarly the Kashmiri poets also imitated the similes of the Persian poets. Thus *ruba'is* are used for the lips of the beloved, her teeth pearls, her ringlets hyacinths, her brows the archer's bow and her glances the arrows sped from that bow.

Having been powerfully influenced by Persian culture and literature besides having a great part of its vocabulary of Persian origin, the Kashmiri language suggests the remarkable degree to which the Islamic culture, forged in Persian and Central Asian crucible, influenced Kashmiri society. It is, therefore, understandable to see Kashmir *Persianate by extension* not only linguistically and culturally but also in the sphere of religion.

What is, perhaps, more important about the significance of the Kashmiri language as a source of information for us is that it provides clinching evidence to show that Islam entered Kashmir as a full-fledged civilization building religion. The word fund of the Kashmiri language contains a large number of technology and culture related words and terms, which originated in Persia, Central Asia or elsewhere, and were introduced in Kashmir by the Muslim immigrants. For an assessment of the import of Kashmiri as a source for knowing the contribution of Muslims to the technology and culture of Kashmir we may, for the sake of neat delineation of the subject, divide the word fund of the language into four categories:

1) The words and terms which originated in Persia, Central Asia or elsewhere, became part of the Kashmiri language

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[17] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Vol.II, p.293

[18] About the works, prescribed for higher studies in Kashmir, a useful information is provided by Bābā Dā'ūd Khaki in his *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*.

with the spread of Islam in Kashmir and have no substitutes in Kashmiri save that some of them were Kashmirized phonologically and morphologically.

2) The words and terms which originated in Persia, Central Asia or elsewhere, became part of the Kashmiri language with the spread of Islam, had substitutes in the Kashmiri language but the new words / terms had different cultural connotation.

3) The words and terms introduced by the Muslims but without becoming part of the Kashmiri Language. The old Kashmiri terms denoting some technology or cultural item continued to be used to the exclusion of the new terms after which such technology or cultural item was known in the intruding culture even though far-reaching changes were effected in them by the latter.

4) The words and terms having purely religious connotation, introduced by the Muslims and became part of the Kashmiri language

Revealing as this information is, it is in the fitness of things to mention some words / terms belonging to each of the above mentioned categories of the word fund of the Kashmiri language to illustrate our argument that Islam entered Kashmir as a civilization building religion.

Category A: Newly introduced words and terms with no substitutes in Kashmiri.

Persian	Nativization	Gloss	Relation with the speci-fic technology/culture
kirm kash	kirm kash	silk worm rearer	Textiles
shāwl bāf	shāwl bāf	shāwl weaver	-do-
qālin bāf	qālin bāf	carpet weaver	-do-
namad sāz	namdasāz	rug weaver	-do-
makhmal	makhmal	velvet	-do-
atlās	atlās	satin	-do-
zar-bāf	zar-bāf	brocade	-do-
naqātī	naqāt	dot maker	-do- A specialized craftsman associated with shawl making.[19]
sāz-garī	sāz-garī	lit. equalizer, harmonizer	-do- A specialized craftsman

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19 Dewān Kripa Rām, *Gulzār-i-Kashmir*, p. 347.

			associated with shawl making
shana-gar	shana-gar	maker of weaver's comb	-do- *Shana-gar* is associated with shawl making *karkhānas*.[20] Therefore *shana-gar* means one who was specialized in manufacturing weavers comb for shawl making.
sīkh-gar	sīkh-gar	maker of wooden skewers.	-do- Independent craft associate with shawl making.[21]
naqqāsh	naqqāsh	painter	-do- Specialized craftsmen associated with *shawl-bāfi*.[22]
chikin	chikan	embroider	-do-
rafugar	rafgar	fine drawer	-do- Specially associated with shawl industry[23]
rang-rēz	rang- rēz / rangur	dyer	-do-
chūna	chūna	lime	**Building technology/ architecture.**
surkhī	surkh	brick dust	-do-
gaj	gachh	morter	-do-
kashi kārī	kashkārī	tile making	-do-
kharādī	kharad	lit. turner	-do- He is also called *turka chhan* in Kashmiri. *Turka* is perhaps a corrupted form of Turk and *chhan* in Kashmiri means carpenter. Thus *turak chhan* means carpenter of Turkistan

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

kharātī	khara‘t	turner	-do-
hamām	hamām	hot bath	-do-
diwān khāna	diwān khān	well furnished and well decorated hall	-do-
ghulām-gardish	ghulām-gardish	verandah	-do-
aurūsī	warūsī	wooden panel partition	-do- *aurūsī* divides a big hall into two or more than two rooms with such a technique that the hall is used as a single room at the time of any social gathering.
mihrābī	mihrabī	arched	-do-
gunbad	gumbad	dome	-do-
minār	minār	minarets	-do-
panjra	panjra	lattice	-do-
shash-muraba‘	shash-muraba‘	a type of roof / paneling	-do-
shash bandh	shash bandh	-do-	-do-
davāzdah sar	davāzdah sar	-do-	-do-
kundawārī	kandoorī	-do-	-do-
chahār khana	char khāna	-do-	-do-
posa	posh	-do-	-do-
shānzdah sar	shānzdah sar	-do-	-do-
dawāzdah-pechak	dawāzdah-pechak	-do-	-do-
jahān shīrīn	jahān shīrīn	-do-	-do-
shesh sitāra	shesh sitāra	-do-	-do-
bandh rumi	bandh rumi	-do-	-do-
mauj	mauj	-do-	-do-
mihrāb dār	mihrāb dār	-do-	-do-
na‘l	na‘l	horse shoe	**Transport and military technology**
zīn	zīn	saddle	-do-

Contd...

rikāb	rikāb	stirrup	-do-
top	tof	cannon	-do-
tufang	tufang	musket	-do-
bandūq	bandūkh	gun	-do-
zarkob	zarkob	gold beater	**Matellergy**
‘allaqaband	‘allaqaband	braider	-do-
haqqāk	haqqāk	lapidary	-do-
muhr-kan	muhr-kun	seal engraver	-do-
kandangar	kundangar	engraver	-do-
roshan gar	roshan gar	polisher	-do-
kāghaz-sāz	kākad-sāz	paper maker	**Paper making**
jilid-sāz	jilid-sāz	book binder	**Book binding**
shēshagar	shēsha gar	mirror maker	**Glass making**
zaz	zaz	maker of musical instruments as *seh tār, tanbūr, rabāb, santoor, sāz, madham and sārang*	
qalamdān-sāzī	qalamdān-sāzī	papier mache	**Papier mache**
bāgh	bāgh	garden	**Agriculture technology**
paiwand	paiwand	grafting	-do-
shākh-tarashī	shākh-tarāshī	pruning	-do-
hindūwāna	hindwend	watermelon	-do-
kharbuza	kharbuz	melon	-do-
alū'i-bukhāra	alubukhār	a kind of plum	-do-
gilās	gilās	cherry	-do-

Contd...

nākh	nākh	a superior kind of pear known as *nākh tang* in Kashmiri. *Tang* in Kashmiri means pear.	-do-
ambarī	ambur	a kind of very delicious apple of Kashmir.	-do-
anj‘īr	injīr	fig	-do-
shah t‘ūt	shah tul	a superior kind of mulberry	-do-
bāqila	bāglah	a kind of bean (*faba sativa*)	-do-

There is a kind of pumpkin in Kashmir known as *mash‘ad al*. Mash‘ad is the corrupt form of Mashhadi. Mashhad is the city of Tus in Khurasan and *al* in Kashmiri means pumpkin. Thus the pumpkin, which probably had its origin in Mashhad and was introduced by the Muslims in Kashmir, came to be known as *mash‘ad al*

shīrīn	shīrīn	a kind of sweet meat	**Agro based Industry**
nabāt	nābad	sugar candy	-do-
pīrahān	pheran	long and loose outer garment	**Costumes.** *Pheran* is, so to say, the national dress of Kashmir
kurta	kurta‘n’	shirt	-do-
sadrī	sadir’	waist-coat	-do-
qasāba	qasāb	a kind of women's head dress	-do- *Qasaba* is also called *qasawah* in some parts of Central Asia[24] Until recently *qasāb* was the respectable head dress of Kashmiri women

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[24] Shamas al-Dīn Ahmad, op.cit., pp. 287-88.

tāqī	tākan'	a kind of cap worn under *qasab*	-do-
jarāba	jurāb	socks	-do-
pā-tāba	potu	legging	-do-
kulāhi sozan	sozan to'p	cap with needle work	-do- *Sozan* in Persian means needle; *to'p* in Kashmiri means cap. *Sozan to'p* is used for a cotton cap with needle work.
kabāb	kabāb	a dish of Kashmiri *wāzawān*	**Food and drinks**
tabakh	tabakh	-do-	-do-
rāughan-josh	rāughan-jōsh	-do-	-do-
qaurma	qurma	-do-	-do-
yakhnī	yakhi'n'	-do-	-do-
āb-gōsht	ābgōsh	-do-	-do-
kofta	kufta	-do-	-do-
birishta	rista	-do-	-do-
gosht-āba	goshtāb	-do-	-do-
harīsa	har'si	-do-	-do-
pi'lav	pulāv	-do-	-do-
mutanjan	mutjan	-do-	-do-
qahwa	qahwa	drinks	-do-
halwa	halwa	sweet dish	-do-
shīrīn	shīrīn	sweat meat	-do-
nabāt	nābad	candy	-do-
lawāsh	lawās	bread	-do-

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girdā	girdā	-do-	-do-
baqir khanī	b‘aqir khān’	-do-	-do
shir-māl	shir-māl	-do-	-do-
kulcha	kulch‘a	-do-	-do-
qandi-kulcha	qandikulch‘a	-do-	-do-
dastār-khwan	dastar-khan	dining table sheet	Table etiquettes
dēg	dēg	a big cooking pot	**Utensils** *Dēg* is used at the time of marriage ceremonies and the like.
tasht	tash	ewer	-do-
patil or patila	p‘atila	tea pot made of copper or brass	-do-
majma	majma	tray	-do-
kanda kārī	kand k‘ar	the term used for the pots with carvings	-do-

Samavar which is originally a Russian word *somavar* was also most probably introduced by the Muslims.

isfahānī	isfahānī	a musical genre	**Music**
chārgah	chārgah	-do-	-do-
irāq	irāq	-do-	-do-
nauroz’i saba	nauroz’i saba	-do-	-do-
hussanī	hussanī	-do-	-do-
nava	nava	-do-	-do-
a‘shiran	a‘shran	-do-	-do-
naurozi ‘ajam	naurozi ‘ajam	-do-	-do-
naurozi ‘arab	naurozi ‘arab	-do-	-do-
shahnāz	shahnāz	-do-	-do-

Contd...

bahār	bahār	-do-	-do-
ghazal	ghazal	-do-	-do-
sehgah	sehgah	-do-	-do-
panjgah	panjgah	-do-	-do-
rast'i fārsī	rast'i fārsī	-do-	-do-
dugah	dugah	-do-	-do-
sēhtā	sēhtāl	a musical rhythm	-do-
nimdūr	nimdūr	-do-	-do-
dur'i khafif	dur'i khafif	-do-	-do-
turk'i zarb	turk'i zarb	-do-	-do-
rabāb	rabāb	a musical instrument	-do-
seh tār	sitār	-do-	-do-
du tār	du tār	-do-	-do-
santūr	santūr	-do-	-do-
sāz	sāz	-do-	-do-
nāy	nay	-do-	-do-
sumay	sumay	-do-	-do-
chang	chang	-do-	-do-
tumbur	tumbur	-do-	-do-
tanbak	tumbak	-do	-do-
daf	daf	-do-	-do-
duhal	duhal	-do-	-do-
mizmār	mizmār	-do-	-do-
sūfiana kalām	sūfiana kalām	a kind of music	-do-
hāfiz naghma	hāfiz naghma	a kind of dance	Dance
ghazl	ghazl	lyrical poem	**Literature**
marsiya	marsi	elegy	-do-

Contd...

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mathnavī	mathnavī	long narrative poem/ poetry composed of distiches corresponding in measure, each consisting a pair of rhymes.	-do-
ruba'ī	ruba'ī	quatrain	-do-
qasīda	qasīda	panegyric	-do-
na't	na't	a devotional poem honouring the Prophet	-do-
manqabat	manqabat	a devotional poem honouring the *pīr*	-do-
shafā khāna	shafā khāna	hospital	**Health**
unani 'ilaj	unani yalaj	unani treatment	do
unani dawā'	unani dawā'	unani medicine	do

Category B: Words and terms having substitutes in Kashmiri and used interchangeably though varying in connotation

Persian	Nativization	Kashmiri	Gloss	Remarks
kāghaz	kākad	burza	paper	Even though the Sultāns introduced tag paper,[25] still the Kashmiris continued to call it *burza* (birch bark) – the material traditionally used for writing purposes.
misgar	misgar	thānthur	copper-smith	Though copper smithy was an old craft of Kashmir, the *misgars* of Persia and Central Asia introduced the technology of making new types of pots which were not in use prior to Islam, for example, *aftāba*, *tasht*, *kandkari* pots, etc.

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25 Sayyid 'Ali, *Tārikh-i Kashmir,* f. 15b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī,* ff. 22b,23a.

zargar	zargar	sonur	goldsmith	The *zargars* introduced new types of Persian and Central Asian ornaments viz; *bazu-band*, *pēshāni-band*, *daswāna*, *gulu band*, *tomār*, *khalkhāl*, *gashwār*, etc.[26]
hakīm	hakīm	vēd	doctor	While the *hakīms'* treatment was based on Unani system of medicine, the *vēds* continued with the traditional Aurvedic system. With the mass conversion, *hakīm* replaced *vēd* as the popular doctor.
dēgcha	dēgchi	lej	rice cooking pot	In Kashmir *degcha* is always understood as a copper made rice cooking pot. On the other hand, *lej* is used both for clay made as well as copper made pot used for cooking as well as for storage purposes. Both are called *lej* because of having almost similar shape and size.
qashāq	qāshwa	chūnch'a	spoon	While the name *qāshwa* is invariably used for copper spoon and is both medium and small sized, *chuncha* means a big wooden spoon used for cooking and not meant for dining table. No doubt the *chuncha* used for tea is made of copper but its shape is quite different from *qāshwa*. Thus *qāshwa* has a different connotation from *chuncha*.
pā-afzar	pā'zār	khurban	boot	

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[26] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 36

Category C : Continuation of old naming, though the new changes invested them with new meanings

Persian	Nativization	Kashmiri	Gloss
pul	x	ka'dl	bridge

While the bridge continued to be called by the local term *ka'dl*, the Muslims introduced a far developed technology of bridge building – permanent bridges built according to the cantilever principle – replacing the old system of boat bridges.[27]

āftāba	x	na'r	water pot

The copper made *āftāba* introduced by the Muslims as a convenient means of providing water to big gatherings at the time of marriage ceremonies or other social functions continued to be called after the name of the traditional water pot *na'r* though the new pot was quite different in technology and design. Moreover, the technical meaning of the new water pot had no relationship with the old. While the old *na'r* was simply a small water pot, the *āftaba* was and continues to be used with its other necessary concomitant, *tash*, introduced by the Muslims, for providing water for washing hands to the large crowd of guests at the time of social gatherings like marriage ceremonies. The *tash-na'ri* system, however, does not obtain among the Hindus of Kashmir.

Alongside the aforementioned words and terms, testifying to the introduction of new technology and culture by the Muslims, the Kashmiri language also bears out the influx of Islamic beliefs and values and their sustained preachings by the Muslim missionaries, teeming as the language is with Islamic concepts and terms. A glance over these terms, which have become an integral part of the Kashmiri language and are spoken by *khās* (elite) as well as *'ām* (common people), makes it abundantly clear that the Muslim preachers had entered Kashmir with a clear agenda to change Kashmir after the Islamic world view and ethics for which they struggled hard resulting in, at least, the conceptual separation of the Muslims from the non-Muslims after the missionaries put forth before the Muslims the criteria of what a Muslim ought to be. Some of these terms are reproduced here. However, the English translation is only a literal translation, not communicating the essence for want of space.

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[27] For the fact that there were no permanent bridges in Kashmir before the Sultans, see M.A.Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, vol. II, p. 449; and that the Sultans introduced permanent bridge building technology, see Śrivara, p. 127; *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (tr. R&B). II, p. 142; Abā Rafi al-Dīn Ahmad, *Nawādir al-Akhbār*, f. 34a; *Shāhijahān-nāma*, (text), II, pp. 31-32.

Terms/ concepts	Gloss	Terms/ concepts	Gloss
kalima	the Muslim confession of faith: There is no God but God and Muhammad is His Prophet	shariah (Kmr.sha-ri'at	the Islamic law. In Sūfism it is th first stage of the spiritual path
namāz	prayers which are repeated five times a day	tariqah (Kmr.tariqat	the second stage in the spiritual path
roza	fast	haqiqah (Kmr.haqiq-at	the third stage in the spiritual path
zakāt (Kmr. zagat)	alms	m'arifa (Kmr.ma'ri-fat	the fourth and th last stage of the Sūfi path
haj	pilgrimage to Makka	akhret	the Hereafter
qur'ān	the holy book of Muslims	mu'jizat (Kmr mujaza')	miracles of the Prophet
hadith	the sayings, doings and things approved by the Prophet	imām	leader of the prayer; also leader of the Muslims
wasīl dar	receiver of intercessory plea	karāmat	miracles of the saints
allāh	God	gunah	sin
nabī	the Prophet	janat	Paradise
paighambar (Kmr.paighambar)	the Prophet	jahanam	Hell
walī	friend of God, godman	qiyāmat	the day of resurrection
auliyā'	friends of God	buzargan'i dīn	used as an alternative term for *auliyā'*

khudā	God	fatila	amulet
sawāb	a good work that shall be rewarded	‘urus (Kmr.warus)	generic term for religious festivities
shirk	polytheism	mu’min	a good Muslim
musalmān	Muslim	kāfir	non-believer
muftī	expounder of Islamic law	ta‘wiz	amulet
ziyārat	pilgrimage; also used for a shrine	khatib	one who gives sermons in the mosque
halāl (Kmr.halhal)	lawful according to Islam	harām	unlawful according to Islam
pāk	permitted in Islam	na-pāk	forbidden in Islam
nēkī	virtue	badī	vice
īmāndār	honest person	muttaqī	pious
bai-īmān	dishonest person	asūl parast	man of principle
bad-kāri	activities not sanctioned in Islam such as adultery, drinking etc.	zinā’	adultery — a strictly forbidden activity
shārab khwār	drunkard-- a pejorative word	tamā‘I dunyā	worldly lust- used abhorrently
sūd khwār	one who takes interest on one’s lendings — a strictly forbidden practice in Islam	shukur	gratitude to God for what one receives — a virtue
ghaibat	back biting–a moral vice	sabr	patience– a virtue
parhēagār	pious	masjid	mosque

tawakul (Kmr taukal)	resignation to the divine will — a virtue	qurān-khwān	the reader of the Qur'ān — used to denote a pious person
haya /sharm	modesty — a virtue	bi-haya'ī/bi-sharmī	immodest— a vice
khairāt	alms giving—a virtue	garib parvar	kind to poor— a virtue
mahman nawāz	hospitable— a virtue	madrasah (Kmr. madras)	school
khānaqāh	hospice	niyāz	alms
qāzī (Kmr.qa'z)	judge	talāq	divorce
nikāh	marriage contract	mahr (Kmr.moh'r)	dower
'alim	learned in Islamic knowledge	khutnah	circumcision
khāna dār,	house keeper. In Kashmir the male head of the family is called *khānadār*.	khāna dārin	*khānadārin* is a generic term used for wife.

Proverbs

Marc Bloch, while underlining the significance of painting and sculpture as important sources of information for a religious historian, says that "the painting and sculpture of sanctuary walls and the arrangement and furnishings of tombs have at least as much to tell him about dead beliefs and feelings as a thousand contemporary manuscripts."[28] If we say that a maxim throws as much light for understanding our history as one cannot get even after reading a thousand manuscripts, we are not perhaps indulging in poetic fancies. A proverb is, as a matter of fact, a tested hypothesis; and the proverbs put together consitute a compendium of human experiences on matters marvellous in their diversity. They contain much thought out and empirically drawn lessons which mankind put forth after sustained and empiric experiences over the centuries to grapple with its multifarious problems. They throw light on intricate questions of human psychology and collective mentality; and in this way not only provide us incredibly valuable information, but help in searching for significant materials and interpreting the data. To be sure, the maxims help us in the same way as the concepts and hypotheses of social scientists help a historian in searching, interpreting and organizing the material. They provide ready made answers to the questions that always pre-occupy the mind of a historian, particularly, how, why and in what manner did a society or a section of society respond and react to a given situation it was encountered with? What are the pre-dispositions of human beings? Do all humans belong to the same psychological regime? Is there fundamental homogeneity in the mental aims and sensory perceptions of people in one society in one period? What factors influence and govern human behaviour? What are the collective experiences and collective views of a given society on diversified issues?

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[28] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, p. 67.

In the absence of answers to such questions in the chronicles and other sources, the historian generally takes recourse to presumptions because of his basic and essential function which is to establish cause-effect relationship. However, by their very nature pre-suppositions, even if drawn from scientific theories, are fraught with serious limitations for want of evidence. With aphorisms in hand one need not fall back upon presumptions. Maxims tersely sum up human experiences gathered after centuries of empiric knowledge; and as the innate characteristics of humans are persistent, the experiences and lessons contained in the proverbs apply to all times, especially to the pre-modem times when continuity rather than change characterized our history. Surely, it is because of their all time validity that the proverbs are repeated, echoed and re-echoed right through the old times till our own regardless of changes, even the recent dramatic changes, in technology and culture.

True, we find the element of contradiction in the proverbs – some maxims contradicting the others. However, these contradictions reveal a significant fact about human society. They show that human behaviour is a complex phenomenon and the condition for success of a historian in his endeavour to meaningfully reconstruct the past is to penetrate into the secrets of this complex human behaviour, the behaviour which has never been and never can be understood in the backdrop of a single cause howsoever 'potential' the cause may appear. The contradictions that we find in the maxims, therefore, need our serious attention rather than to be dismissed as a bizarre talk.

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This is not the place to give an exhaustive account of the significance of maxims as an invaluable source shedding light on the total history of Kashmir; we may, however, quote a few aphorisms which underline the role of material factor, power, reference culture, structurally induced social conflicts, habit of mind and mentality in governing human behaviour.

Role of material Factor	*Yed dag gai b‘ad dag* The stomach pain is the greatest pain.
	Matlab chhu tstān put-lab Interests cut the back wall of a house.
	Tshour atha chhu na atsan ‘asas ti An empty hand does not even enter the mouth.
	Yedal chhu bai-īman A greedy man has no religion.
	Pansah gav parud tah mikr‘az, yat peth thawizen tat tsatih Money is as quicksilver and scissors, lay it upon what you will, it will cut it.
Role of material factor, power and referance culture	*Yukun reh tokun teker* To shift the cauldron to where the flame is blazing.
	Yukun wāv tokun nāv To set sail in the wind's direction.
	Ak chhiwyov masah bai hakah rasah One man drank wine, another juice of vegetables (to satisfy his complex).
	Dastaran chh na mul darbāran chhu No worth is attached to turban, but to position.
Role of internal dissensions / class antagonism	*Darvas chhu fhatwan pannui pun* A log is broken apart by its own wedge.
	Hur nai pilas zangai z‘las I will pull his legs though I may not reach his head.
Role of habit	*Maraz galih wedah-wān ādat katih galih?* The disease will go at the doctor's shop, but the habit will never go.

	Panun 'aib go m'āshūq A man loves his own fault.
Role of Environment	*Tsūnt wuchhith chhu tsūnt rang rattān* It is the association that shapes humans.
Mass mentality	*'Ām go khām* Masses are asses.
Belief in the miraculous Powers of the saints	*Matein hund dup chhu balāyan thup* A *darvaish's* utterance wards off disasters.
Faith healing	*Pīr nah bod, yakīn bod* *Pīr* is not great, faith is great.

PERSONAL NAMES

Muslim patterns of naming

The names borne by the Muslims are yet another important source that shed light on the process of Islamization in Kashmir. However, before we see what kind of light they throw on the subject, it is necessary to mention the different name categories we come across in our written sources – chronicles and hagiographical works. The personal Muslim names found in the sources can be divided into three distinct type groups:

Pre-Islamic names	Some of the names that fall under this category are: Ladi, Devi, Langar, Gada'i, Chani, Pandoo, Regi, Shankar, Hilmat, Tazi, Seh, Zeitu, Nooni, Naji, Lobar, Luda, Lankar, Shankar, Lacham, Rupi, Hardi, Nund, Sang, Shanga, Ganga, Dehat, Bihat, Sundari, etc.
Persian names	Nauroz, Bahrām, Sanjar, Rustam, Khātūn, etc.
Muslim names	Ja'far, Harith, Umar, Sulaiman, Dā'ūd, Musa, Yūsuf, Ya'qub Muhammad, Ahmad, 'Ali, Gaffār, Ibrahīm, Sattār, Karīm, Rahīm, Raziq, Gani, Wahhāb, Samad, Fatha, Hasan, Husain, Hājrah, Sārah, Sāliha, 'Āshiya, Zainab, Khatīja, Sā'ida, etc.

The fact that a good number of Muslims bore pre-Islamic names even after a pretty long time of their conversion points to the gradual rather than abrupt process of Islamization in Kashmir. Evidently the gradual process of Islamization was part of the policy adopted by the Muslim preachers to meet the demands of expediency. They did not insist on changing the names, which because of social and psychological reasons would have stuck in the gizzards of the prospective converts. Initially when a newly convert was living in a society which was dominantly non-Muslim and where his neighbours were mostly of other religions, it was not desirable for him to wear his religion on his sleeves. And once this concession was given to the circumstances, it became a norm: the naming of children became an act of free choice. It is in place to mention here that conversion without changing the name was not an innovation made in Kashmir. The same practice obtained in the early Islamic Iran and Central Asia,[29] making it an acceptable policy: win conversions without quarrelling over trifles.

While in the beginning the converts generally bore pre-Islamic names, the trend, however, changed towards the end of the fifteenth century as these names appear with ‘decreasing frequency, testifying to the preponderance of Islamic culture. The parents preferred Muslim names for their children to claim for them a membership of the high culture rather than to be ostracized. Still, the practice of bestowing pre-Islamic names on their children was not altogether banished by the Muslims from their cultural kingdom as many names referred to above have been found in the sources relevant for sixteenth century Kashmir and were, significantly enough, borne by the indigenous noble class and some members of the venerated indigenous Sûfis known as Rishis.

What is equally important to note is that in the predominant Kashmiri environment, with *Kôshur* as the mother tongue of the people, the Muslim names came to be, in general cases, Kashmirized and, therefore, corrupted which not only distorted their form but meaning too; and in most cases became meaningless. For example, Muhammad (not, of course, Prophet Muhammad) came to be pronounced Mahmud and more distortingly, Mumma; Ahmad became Ahmud and more distortingly, Amma; Rasool became Rasul and more distortingly, Lassa or Lūs; Khadija became Khateej and Zainab, Z‘ana. And when used for calling Muhammad came to be called,

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[29] Richard W. Bulliet, "Conversion to Islam and the Emergence of a Muslim Society in Iran," in Nehemia Levtzion (ed.) *Conversion to Islam*, pp. 43, 47.

Mahmdēv, Ahmad, Ahamdēv, Khadija, Khaṭji or Khatjai, Zainab, Zaina'i etc. The '*ulamā*', who in Kashmir are generally approached by the parents for naming their children, too, offered Kashmirized version of Muslim names. Thus they would never suggest the name Muhammad but Mahmud or Ahmad but Ahmud. Similarly they never suggested Khadija or Zainab but only their localized forms. "Naming", as R.W. Bulliet says "for many parents is an act that reflects, usually unconsciously, their view of the society around them at that particular point in time."[30] Although with the increasing influence of Islam the Muslims cast off their old naming ties, the deeply embedded local culture perverted the form of Muslim names, devoiding them of the inevitable impact on the mentality of the people, invested as the actual Muslim names were with profound cultural resources.

Also, the naming patterns substantiate the preponderant influence of Persianate Islamic culture on Kashmir. According to Bulliet, three name types became common in Iran from the early tenth century when it assumed the character of a mass Muslim society. These were, according to his categorization, 'Old Testament/Qur'ānic names such as Sulayman, Dā'ūd, Musa, Yūsuf, Yaqub etc; Persian names such as Rustum or Bahram and, unimpeachably Muslim names like Muhammad, Ahmad, Ali, etc.'[31] The same naming patterns, needless to repeat, assumed popularity in Kashmir after it became a Muslim society. And if the Kashmiri Muslims did not completely part their ways with the pre-Islamic naming patterns, this, too, was inspired and legitimized by Iranian tradition where alongside Muslim names Sassanian names became acceptable to the Muslim mind particularly from the late tenth century.[32]

We, however, find a big difference between Iran and Kashmir, which points to a vital variation in the conversion process between the two societies. In Iran, says Bulliet, "people of the patrician class born before the eleventh century almost never have Persian names."[33] Contrary was, however, the situation in Kashmir. The pre-Islamic names referred to above were exclusively borne by the patrician class of Kashmir. Thus, while in early Iran the patrician class adopted the names of the Muslims to flaunt their unqualified commitment towards

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[32] Ibid., p. 47.

[33] Ibid., p. 44.

Islam as a proof of their unflinching loyalty towards Muslim rule established by conquest, in Kashmir no such compulsion was felt by them which would force them to toe the line of the rulers on every matter to wear their faithfulness on their sleeves. After all, unlike Iran, Muslim rule was not established by conquest in Kashmir. In fact, the Muslim rulers depended solely on the support of the local patrician class. So the local power groups had no political pressure to compromise with what they had deep emotional and cultural commitment. This further substantiates the view that Islam spread in Kashmir not by persecution but by persuasion.

Surnames ***(krāms)***

A very rich repository of information that no historian of Kashmir can ignore save to his disadvantage is the innumerable *krāms* borne by the different groups of Kashmiri society. While these surnames light up different dark corners of Kashmir's historical profile, we will, however, specifically examine their significance as a source for constructing the history of Islam. For a neat analysis of these *krāms* for our immediate purpose, we may divide them under the following headings and sub-headings:

A) Pre-Islamic Krāms

i. *Krāms of the upper classes:* Bhat, Dār, Māgray, Loan, Tāntray, Raina, Nāyak, Chak Thākur, Rāther, Parray, Iitoo, Dāngar, Lavai, Pāl, Kucchay, Padar, Nāth, Tāk, Wānī, Koul, etc.

ii. *Krāms of the urban craftsmen:* Sonar (goldsmith), Sarrāf (banker), Thānthur (coppersmith), etc.

iii. *Krāms of the lower castes:* Nāid (barber), Khār (black smith), Krāl (potter), Chhān (carpenter), Gūr (milkman), Āram (vegetable grower), Dhōb (washer man), Hānz (fisher men and boat men), Pōhl (shepherd), Dōmb and Chandāl.

B) Krāms of the Muslim community of Kashmir

i. *Retention of the prestigious traditional krāms:* Bhat, Dār, Māgray, Loan, Tāntray, Raina, Chak, Rāther, Thākur, Parray, Dangar, Padar, Kuchay, Pāl, Khānday, Rishi, Pandit, Wānī, Tāk, etc.

ii. ***Newly introduced krāms***

Krāms with religious connotation: Shaikh, Suhrawardī, Hamdānī, Kubrāvī, Chishtī, Qādrī, Naqashbandī, Makhdūmī, Simnānī, Kāshanī, Gīlani, Madanī, Mantaqī, Quraishi, 'Alvi, Rafā'i, Kāmlī, Nāzkī, Yazdānī, Rizvī, Balkhī, Bukhārī, Andrabī, Khatā'ī, Sherāzī, Jīlānī, Masoodī, Jāmī, Rafīqī, Baihaqī, Sarafī, Nahvī, Muftī, Khatīb, Qāzī, Akhūn, Pīr, Mulla, Bābā, Shāh, Bāngī, etc.

Secular krāms: Shāhmīrī, Jān, Mirzā, Ganaie, Bāig, Mughal, Kōka, Mīr, Khān, Bānday, etc.

Occupational krāms: Chikin (embroider), Sheshagar (mirror maker), Jild-sāz (book binder), Kāghaz-saz (paper manufacturer), Khattāt (calligraphist), Qālin-bāf (carpet maker), Shāwl-bāf (shawl maker), Na'laband (ferrier), 'Allaqaband (braider), Hakkāk (lapidary), Roshangar (polisher), Naqqāsh (painter), Naqāsī (dot maker), Zargar (goldsmith), Sāzagar (equilizer), Shānagar (maker of shawl weaver's loom), Sekhgar (maker of skews), Ranggar (dyer), Rafugar (fine-drawer), Hakīm (doctor), Suhāf (book-binder), Chettagar (maker of chintz), Kachgar (mirror maker), Kozagar (cup maker), Zaz (maker of musical instruments), Jālak doz (embroider), etc.

C) ***Krāms* assumed by socially low groups**

Shaikh, Ganaī, Mīr, Shāh, Sūfī, Malla, Bābā, Dār, Pandit, Nanda etc.

D) **Persianization of traditional occupational *krāms***

Zargar (gold smith), Hajjām (barber), Nanwāi (baker), Najjār (carpenter), Āhangar (black smith), etc.

E) **Shared *krāms* between Muslims and Hindus**

Bhat, Dār, Raina, Koul, Pandit, Handoo, Mattu, Nāth, Waid, Chalkoo, Malla, Jalāli, Zadu, Draboo, Jāllā, Wāngnoo, Zādu, Zaroo, Kalu, Ka'u, Kāk, Lattoo, Safāya, Kakru, Tēng, Wānchu, Bungroo, Bazāz, Balu, etc.

F) **Some occupational *krāms* of Kashmiri Pandits**

Rāzdān, Fotadār, Ambardār, Jalālī, Waguzārī, Qāzī, Muhatasib, Sāhib, Sultān, Zamīndār, Ganju, Sazāwul, Karawāni, Naqīb, Dīwanī, Khazānchī, Amīn, etc.

The *krām* profile of Kashmiri society, first of all, helps us in knowing the class and caste composition of the converts and the relative response of the different social strata to conversion. Even a cursory glance over the records show that the *krāms* of the pre-Islamic landed aristocracy, *Bhat*, *Dār*, *Māgray*, *Tāntray*, *Rāther*, *Loan*, etc., referred to by the generic term *damaras* by Kalhana,[34]

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[34] For details, see M.A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, vol. II, pp. 304-308.

are borne by the major segment of Kashmiri Muslim population, testifying to the fact that the predominant majority of the 'feudal barons' of Kashmir figured among the prominent converts. Perhaps only a minuscule number of them stuck to Hindu religion. Of course, the *krāms* like *Bhat* and *Dār* are also held by a section of Kashmiri Pandits but, comparing to the predominant Muslim *Bhats* and *Dārs*, their number is extremely slender. Only the Pandit *Rainas* are larger as compared to the Muslim *Rainas*; but it is not owing to the refusal of the greater number of this group of landed aristocracy to accept Islam; instead, it is because of the exchange of surname *Raina* by *Malik* and other high sounding titles in the wake of Islamic influences. *Raina* was essentially the title given to the great nobles during the Hindu *rājas*;[35] and as during the Muslims this covetous title came to be called *Malik*, the erstwhile *Rainas* adopted the substituted *krām* of *Malik* leading to the decline in the number of Muslim *Rainas*.[36] Although a section of *Bhats, Rainas and Dārs*, though small in number, continued to remain within the Hindu fold, the other land-owning tribes viz; *Māgrey, Tāntray, Loan, Nāik, Thākur, Rāther, Parray, Itoo*, and *Chak* embraced Islam *en masse*, as none of Kashmiri Pandits bears any of these *krāms*; and all these surnames are exclusively carried by the Muslims. This clearly shows that the most significant type of converts, who were also perhaps among the first to enter into the fold of Islam, comprised the most powerful land-owning tribes of Kashmir whom Kalhana contemptuously calls *damaras* for their ferociously unruly conduct and their role as king makers and power brokers.

The study of *krāms* also helps us to know that the second important section, which embraced Islam one and all, consisted of the merchant class known as *Wānīs* (Sk.*Vānik*) as none of the Pandits holds this *krām*: and all the *Wānīs* of Kashmir are Muslims. This is also substantiated by a contemporary Sanskrit chronicler who especially mentions the merchants for openly disregarding their belief in their ancestral religion and flaunting their faith in Islam.[37] What is more, the *krāms* like *Koul, Pandit, Mattu, Drābu, Zadoo*, etc., sharedly borne by

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[35] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 6a.

[36] For example, the famous Raina dynasty which descended from Rawanchandra, the Prime Minister and brother-in-law of Rinchana, assumed the surname of Malik during the latter period of the Sultanate. Haidar Malik Chadoora, who belongs to this dynasty, wrongly says that Rinchana bestowed the title Malik upon Rawanchandra (Haidar Malik, p. 36).

[37] Śrivara, pp. 234-235, 319-320.

Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims amply substantiate the literary evidence that along with the non-*brāhmans*, Islam was embraced by a large number of *brāhmanas* too. It should also be remembered that all the *brāhmana* converts did not carry their traditional *krāms* with them after their conversion, instead, most of them adopted new *krāms* as *Shāh*, *Mīr*, *Shaikh*, etc., chosen from the catalogue of Islamic onomasticon.[38] Thus the munber of *brāhmana* converts was more than is adumbrated by the identical *krāms* of the Pandits and the Muslims.

The maintenance of traditional *krāms* by the converts belonging to upper classes alludes to two facts: one, that Muslim preachers did not touch those issues which were considered frivolous. And retaining or changing the *krāms* by the converts was one such issue. Second, it shows the uninterrupted powerful position enjoyed by the traditional upper classes of Kashmir notwithstanding the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate and the immigration of the sections of prestigious Muslims from Persia and Central Asia. With a deeply entrenched powerful position, the upper class converts did not feel themselves socially or psychologically inferior to the upper class immigrants, which would have otherwise forced them to adopt the newly introduced prestigious *krāms* as was done by the people belonging to lower classes.

The *krāms* also reveal some significant facts about the lower castes and the mass conversions to Islam. First, they show substantially, as compared to the written evidence, that the outcastes were not contented with the given Brāhmanical religious and social order for reasons of its discriminatory attitude against the working classes. Little wonder, then, that all the *Gilkōrs* or *Kumārs* (potters), *Āhangars* (iron smiths), *Hajjāms* (barbers), *Gūrūs* (milkmen), *Najjārs* (carpenters), *Chōpōns* (shepherds), *Nānwais* (bakers), *Misgars* (copper smiths), *Zargars* (gold smiths), *Dhōbīs* (washermen), *Shākhsāzs* (willow workers), *Sirājs* (shoe makers), *Ārams*, (vegetable growers) and all those who are associated with menial jobs are Muslims; and none of them is a Hindu. While for identifying these lower caste converts the continuity of some old professions on hereditary basis down to our times is an important source, more important is the *krāms*, for in the wake of modernization there has been dramatic change in the

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38 For instance, the *brāhmana* of Kāli Mandir, whom Sayyid 'Ali Hamdani converted to Islam, adopted the name of Shāh Muhammad Shāh. Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5a. Similarly the ancestor of Shaikh Fatah Allāh Hāfiz and Shaikh Ismā'īl – the great saints of Kashmir–was also a *brāhmana* convert to Islam. *Wāqi'at-i Kashmīr*, pp. 82-83.

traditional occupational structure of Kashmir; and all those who could afford to abandon their hereditary callings, they did it without demur to improve their social and economic position. It is also true that there has also been an increasing tendency to slough off those occupational surnames which carry the stigma of belonging to lower social groups; but still the occupational surnames are not as much on the wane as the traditional occupations are or as increasing is the incidence of occupational mobility.

The panorama of occupational surnames, particularly the replacement of some *krāms* by entirely new ones brings to light an important fact, namely that the occupational castes did not form an undifferentiated mass of people. On the contrary, while all the outcastes were held in contempt, some were, however, considered uncompromisingly unworthy either for social intercourse or for human treatment or both. Such were, for example, the *Dōmbas*, *Chandālas*, *Pujs* (butchers), *Hānjīs*(boat men), *Ārams* (vegetable sellers) and the like. It is, therefore, understandable that these castes abandoned their old *krāms* altogether and assumed new and respectable surnames as *Ganaï*, *Shaikh*, *Shāh*, *Mīr*, *Sūfī*, *Dār*, *Pandit*, *Malla* and the like to claim a respectable position in society. It is, therefore, not fortuitous that the Muslims with these *krāms* combinedly constitute a big segment of Kashmiri population, next only to the predominant Muslim *Bhats*. The assumption of socially dignified *krāms* by the lower social groups, at least, speaks of a different environment in which these otherwise disdained sections felt themselves elevated, emboldening them to claim dignified *krāms*. Or these *krāms* were bestowed upon the despised sections by the Muslim preachers to make a parade of the social equality principle of Islam. Thus a barber preferred the surname *Hajjām* to the stigmatized traditional *krām*, *Nāvid*. Same is the case with potter, carpenter, barber, milkman, iron smith, copper smith, gold smith, etc.

The *krāms* mentioned under the caption 'Newly introduced krāms' substantiate tangibly the contemporary evidence regarding the large-scale influx of Muslims from Persia and Central Asia. As can be seen, the Muslim immigrants belonged to different persuasions and fields. The largest number consisted of the preachers as is indicated by the largest incidence of religion related *krāms*. The other groups were artisans, craftsmen, scholars, poets and men of varied fields of learning, attracted by the patronage of the rulers. The Muslim conquerors like Mirzā Haidar Dughlat encouraged immigrations of their own people to build a strong supporting structure as is evident by such Mughal *krāms* as *Mirzā, Beig, Kōka, Mughal and Khān*. Such type of immigrations swelled with the Mughal and Afghan conquests of Kashmir.

The study of 'religious *krāms*' shows that there were three categories of immigrant Muslim preachers – those who were Sūfis as well as great learned men; those who were mainly '*ulamā*'; and those who had only working knowledge of Islam to teach the reading of the Qur'ān, to lead prayers, and to perform some religious rituals. While the majority of the *krāms* of the category in question belong to the first two types of immigrants, the *krāms* like *Pīr, Ākhūn, Mulla, Bābā* and *Shāh* pertain to the third kind. They were actually brought by the saints with them for helping in creating a primary Islamic ambience in the newly converted land. The spatial distribution of the religious *krāms* shows that the *krāms* with prestigious religious connotations are mainly concentrated in Srinagar and in a few towns; in the villages, on the whole, only *Shāhs, Pīrs, Ākhūns* and *Mullas* are met with. What were its reasons and what consequences followed thereupon? These questions will be answered in the following Chapters.

The *krāms* further substantiate our argument that Islam entered Kashmir as a civilization building ideology – a religion not only with an agenda to bring socio-cultural, spiritual and ethical transformation of the people, but also a religion with a great resource, namely, the advanced technology of the time. That the Muslims introduced varied types of technologies is no doubt borne out by the contemporary chronicles, but the *krāms* provide such an exhaustive list of them that it is in vain to search for such information in the written sources of the time.

Last but not least, the occupational surnames of some Kashmiri Pandit families testify to the strong service linkages between the Kashmiri Pandits and the Muslim rulers. It is worth noting that while we have Kashmiri Pandits with the *krāms* of *Khazānchī, Amīn, Fōtadār and Ambardār*, there is perhaps no Kashmiri Muslim bearing these *krāms*, showing that the Pandits mainly manned these rungs of the administration. This punctures the very argument of the 'force theory' of conversions.

Place Names

"Like the strata of a geologic fossil record", says Richard Eaton, "place names covering the surface of a map silently testify to past historical processes."[39] In Kashmir they show, among other things, some major themes of the Valley's religious history. They betray the changing religious faiths of Kashmiris, the strong presence of *Nāga* cult and Buddhism at a certain stage of its history and the dominance of Brāhmanic religion on the eve of Islam, the existence of different religious cults among the Hindus, social segregation on the basis of ethnic, caste and professional basis, localization and even sub-localization of the sacred *tīrthas*, linkages between land endowments, agrarian expansion and religious changes, influx of foreign cultures and their impact on Kashmir, accommodation and adjustment policy followed by Islamic movement and last but not least, they affirm that Islam entered Kashmir as a civilization building religion .

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[39] Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier*, p. 305.

Although the archaeological and literary sources testify to the changing religious history of Kashmir, the place names not only corroborate it but also provide an enduring evidence of its intensity. The fact that *Nāga* worship was a popular faith of ancient Kashmir has been kept more than alive by the name with which the springs are called in Kashmir. Since it was a popular belief that the sources of water, particularly the springs, are the abodes of tutelary deities who manifest themselves in the form of snakes, the springs in Kashmir came to be called by the generic term *nāg*, meaning serpent in Sanskrit.[40] And eventually the fish of the springs became *halāl* (permissible) to see but *harâm* (forbidden) to eat – the notion, which is held by the Kashmiris, all and sundry, regardless of religious affiliations, down to our own times. While all the springs were considered abodes of tutelary deities, some big springs were considered to be protected by some *Nāgas* occupying high position in the hierarchy of *Nāga* pantheon.[41] This is corroborated by the continuity of the names with which some springs of Kashmir are called down to the present times, for example, Nila Nāg, Śesh Nāg, Veer Nāg, Kōnsar Nāg, Vechār Nāg, Sukh Nāg,Susram Nāg etc.

The prevalence of Buddhism in Kashmir for a long period of time is an established fact; the place names, however, indicate the institutional foundations of its mass basis. That the Buddhists established a network of *sangrāmas* (monastries), *vihāras* and *bhavanas* not only in the capital city but also in the nooks and corners of Kashmir can be traced to the present day in the designation of villages and city quarters as they left their names to the sites at which they were erected. Thus there are many villages in Kashmir known as Sangrām. And all those villages and *muhallas* which have the suffix *vihāra* or *bhavana*, formed the centres of Buddhism.[42] It may be mentioned that there is a considerable number of villages and *muhallas* whose names have the suffix *vōr*. Whether *vōr* is the Kashmirized version of *vihāra* or *iśvara* is an open question.[43] Also, the names of a number of villages/ *muhallas* continue to have *bhavan* as their suffix. For example, Avantabhavan, Khandabhavan, etc. This is besides the fact that there is a famous town known as Bhavan, located near Anantnag.

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[40] Infra, pp.260-61.

[41] *Rājataranginī*, i, note 30. Also see S.C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, pp. 155-58.

While the *Nāga* cult and Buddhism remained successively the main faiths of Kashmir before the sixth century A.D, the *Śaiva* and *Viaśnava* Brāhmanism dominated the religious scene of Kashmir thence forward until Islam earned mass conversion. The predominance of Brahmanism in Kashmir on the eve of the penetration of Islam is shown perhaps more tangibly by the place names. The majority of the villages and *muhallas* are either named after the *Śaiva* and *Vaiśnava* rulers of Kashmir or after a Hindu god or goddess or their incarnations or the Brāhamanic religious institutions. Of the first category of villages/towns mention may be made of Bimyun (perhaps Abhimanyupura founded by Abhimanyu I),[44] Achval (Akśavāla founded by Akśa),[45] Avantipura (built by Avantivarman),[46] Chakur (Cakrapura founded by Cakramardika, the wife of King Lalitaditya),[47] Chandargam (Chandragrāma), Gudar (village founded by Godhāra),[48] Gopkār (named after Gopa *agrahāras* established by Gopaditya),[49] Kalampora (Kalyanāpura founded by Kalyanadevi),[50] Letapur (Lilatāpura founded by Lalitaditya),[51] Pampar (Padmapura founded by

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[42] M. A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol. ii, p. 369, note 85.

[43] For an excellent argument that *Vor* is not the corrupt form of *vihāra*, but means a settlement, abode, place of living, see Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, *A Fresh Approach to the History of Kashmir*, pp. 34-35.

[44] *Rājataranginī*, i. 175.

[45] Ibid., i. 338.

[46] Ibid., v. 44.

[47] Ibid., iv. 213.

[48] Ibid., i. 96n.

[49] Ibid., i.341.

[50] Ibid., iv. 483.

[51] Ibid., iv. 186.

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Padma),[52] Tāpar (Prathapapura founded by Prathapaditya),[53] Ratanpur (founded by Ratnādevī),[54] Simpor (Simhapura founded by Jayasimha),[55] Sōpūr (Suyyapur founded by Suyya)[56], Hurpōr (Śūrapura founded by Śūra),[57] Vijbrōr (Vijayesvāra founded by Vijaya),[58] etc. A large number of villages, towns, quarters, mountains, villages and rivers of Kashmir are known either after the deities of the Brāhamnic pantheon or their incarnations or the Brāhamanic religious institutions or the Brāhamanic sacred sites. For example, Śiva, Hari, Divar, Gūripōr, Varahamulla, Gōpalpōr, Ganeshbal, Indar, Mitargom (Skt. Matragrāma), Mārtand (Skt. Mārtanda, the Sun god), Buchvōr (Skt. Bhuteśvara), Shankarpōr, Ganpatyār, Jōgī Lankar, Jōgīpōr, Māysūm (Māksikasvāmin), Didmar (Diddāmatha), etc; in the case of the names of the villages and quarters; Veth (Vitastā), Send (Sindhu), Ganga, Badrihal, etc; with regard to rivers; Harmukta (Siva's diadem), Hariparbat (Haraparvat), Mahādev, Pāncāladeva, etc; regarding the names of mountains and hills.

This is not, however, all. All those villages whose names have the suffix of *iśa, iśvara, swāmin, mār* (Skt. matha), *hōm* (Skt. *aśrama*), *ham* (Skt. *śala*) and *vōr* (Skt. *vata*) were important centres of Brāhamanic religion.[59] The domination of Brāhamanism is also clear from the fact that even to the present day the local nomenclature of Kashmir whether in the Valley or in the mountains shows throughout an unmistakably Sanskritic character. This is most clearly illustrated by the constant recurrence of such terms as – *pūr* or *pōr* (<*pura*), *gām* or *gōm* (< *grāma*) besides *hām*, *hōm* or *vōr* in village names; of *sar* (< *saras*), *nambal* (< *nadvala*), –*nāg* (< *nāga*) in names of lakes, marshes etc; of – *van* (<*vana*) –*nār* (<*nāda*) – *marg* (<*mathikā*), –*gul* (<*galikā*), *brār* (<*bhattārika*), –*vath* (<*patha*), in designation of alpine localities, peaks, passes etc; –*kul* (< *kulyō*), –*khan* (<*khani*) in names of streams and canals.[60]

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52 Ibid., iv. 695.

53 Ibid., iv. 10.

54 Ibid., viii. 2434.

55 Ibid., viii. 2443.

56 Ibid., v. 118n.

57 Ibid., v. 39.

58 Ibid., ii. 62.

59 Stein, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 369,fn.85,372.

60 Ibid.

The place names also substantiate the written evidence regarding the presence of myriad cults in Brāhmanism. We have seen above that the different villages, towns and quarters are named after different cultic gods/goddesses or their incarnations. The place names also make it amply clear that the people of different lineages, castes and professions either lived in separate villages or in separate quarters. Thus we have the villages designated either after a particular lineage group or a special caste. For example, Āwanpōr (Yavanapura, the place of Yavanas [Greeks]), Bhuttapōr (the habitation of Bhuttas), Dardakot (the habitation of Dards), Malikpōr (the habitation of Maliks), V'an gōm (the village of Wānis), Bhuttakadal (the bridge named after the locality of Bhuttas which eventually became the name of the place), Māgreypōr (the village of Māgrays, the name of a tribe), Warpōr (the locality of Wars, the name of a tribe), Mlecchmar (the habitation of *mlecchas* – non-*brāhmanas*, outsiders especially used for Muslims by our Sanskrit sources), Wāttal Kadal (the bridge named after the locality of scavengers), Na'idyār (the place of barbers), etc. And what is invariably seen down to our recent past is that not only were the lower castes living in separate quarters but the different lineage groups also lived in separate *muhallas*, each known after the *krām* of the group as *Loanpōr*, *Mirpōr*, *Ganiepōr*, *Pīrpōr* etc.

Geographical constraints and the technological poverty led to the creation of alternative sacred places in Kashmir to substitute the main ones for performing religious rituals. Place names provide valuable information in this regard. For example, when we visit different nooks of the Valley we find many places known as Gangabal besides the main Gangabal, a sacred lake on Harmukta, created by the Kashmiri *brāhamanas* as substitutes for Ganga.

No less important a fact revealed by the place names is a strong linkage between land endowments, agrarian settlements, religious institutions and ideological changes. Most of the villages, quarters, and towns carry a name which is an abbreviated composition of the person and the sacred building or which is known after a cultic god/goddess or their incarnations. Different rulers, ministers and other notables founded these places. An important feature of the new foundations was the construction of a temple/ matha and the settlement of *brāhmanas* who were endowed with rent-free land grants known as *agraharas*.[61]

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[61] *Rājataranginī*, i. 88, 90.96,98,100, 121. 175, 311. 314, 340, 441, 343; ii. 55; iii. 376, 481; iv. 9, 639; v. 23. 24, 170, 397. 403, 442; vii. 182, 184, 185, 608. 808, 809. 908; viii. 2408, 2419, 2420, 3355.

Therefore, the more we come across the places named after the rulers and nobles and the settlements having a religious nomenclature, the more they show the dominance of *brāhmanas* and Brāhmanism.

It is remarkable to note that the nomenclature of Kashmir, whether in the Valley or in the mountains, remained intact even after the Muslims occupied Kashmir and Islam became its mass religion. This assumes considerable significance if we bear in mind that this nomenclature had direct linkages with the pre-Islamic religion and culture of Kashmir. For example, there is still a considerable number of villages named as Shiva, Shankarpura, Gopalpura, Indr, Ganeshbal and the like. This makes, at least, one thing clear that the Islamization was a gradual process; it did not embark on the policy of a total quarrel with the local culture; some cultural remnants of the past, which were not considered a serious challenge to Islamization process were tolerated; and among these remains place names figured prominently.

Indeed, comparing the long rule of the Sultāns and the far-reaching changes with which the period is characterized, the place names with Islamic nomenclature are very scarce. And of the available few places designated after the Sultāns, saints, and the Islamic institutions a majority are found in Srinagar,[62] showing that the Sultāns and the saints focused mainly on the capital city for its intensive culture change.

To cap it all, place names constitute a major living evidence showing that Islam entered Kashmir not merely with a set of beliefs, values and rituals but it came as a full-fledged civilization – a civilization with a far advanced technology and culture of the time. This is patently borne out by the toponymics of the capital city of Kashmir – Srinagar. The present Srinagar is not only a conglomeration of different capitals – Rinchanpūr, 'Ala al- Dīnpūr, Qutub al-Dīnpūr, Shihāb al- Dīnpūr, Sikandarpūr and Nowshahr – built by the Sultāns,[63] but it is also an aglomeration of different technologically specialized quarters which came into being during the Sultāns owing to the large scale influx of specialists from different parts of the Muslim world and their settlement in the capital city under the nourishing care of the

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[62] Of some quarters of Srinagar which are famous after Muslim saints or institutions mention may be made of Hisari Sa'bun (The place of Saiyid Hisari), Jami' Masjid, *Khānqāh-i-Mu'alla*, Pīr Hāji Muhammad, Mad'in Sa'bun, Bulbul Langar, Bāhā al-Dīn Sa'bun, Uwasi Sa'bun, etc.

[63] Jonarāja, pp.23. 37, 41-42, 53, 59, 88; Śrivara, pp. 139-39, 142; Sayyid 'Alī, f. 3a, 19a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 10b,16b, 22b.

Sultāns. Some of the famous quarters of Srinagar which assumed the specific technology related names during the Sultāns and are known by the same designations up to the present day are: Na'lband-pūr (the locality of ferriers), Kamangar-pūr (locality of bow makers), Bunduk-khar Muhalla (the quarter of musket makers), Jildgar Muhalla (the locality of book binders), Qalamdān-pūr (the locality of pen case makers), Shesha-gar-pūr (the locality of glass makers), Chinkral Muhalla (the quarter of China pot makers), Sazgar-pūr (the locality of a specialized craftsmen associated with shawl making), Rōshangar Muhalla (the locality of polishers), Chetta-gar Muhalla (the locality of cloth printers), Kachgar-pūr (the locality of glass makers), Sarrāf Kadal (the locality of bankers situated near a bridge (kadal)), Shora-gar Muhalla (the locality of gun-powder makers) etc. In fact there is hardly any quarter or street in the historic Srinagar, which is not named after one or the other traditional craft introduced during the period of the Sultāns.[64] It is also worth noting that some famous quarters of Srinagar are named after a bridge and its builder, the majority of whom were the Sultāns. For example, 'Aāli Kadal, Zaina Kadal, Habba Kadal, and Fateh Kadal. It is not fortuitous that these *kadals* (bridges) became famous after the names of the Sultāns and the quarters situated nearby assumed the names of the *kadals* and their builders. After all, the Sultāns were pioneers in the introduction of permanent bridge building technology in Kashmir.[65]

The strong linkage between Islam and economic development is not only suggested by a multitude of new craft technologies introduced by the Sultāns but also by a network of irrigation canals and new agrarian settlements founded by them. The place names such as Zainagīr Kul, Shāh Kul, Zainagīr Pargana or *'Illaqa*, Zainapūr and Zainakōt stand a living testimony to this fact. The extent of arable land brought under paddy cultivation after constructing these canals and establishing new agrarian settlements can be gauged by the fact that a vast area of Kashmir is uptil now known as Zainapūr and Zainagīr; and a large paddy land continues to be irrigated solely by these canals. An on the spot visit of the land irrigated by the canals constructed by the

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[64] Some of the place names as Bazar-i-Kāghaz Faroshan mentioned by an eighteenth century historian (*Waqi'at-i Kashmir*, p. 93) do not exist today, showing that the present place names of historic Srinagar provide only an incomplete picture of the mushroom growth of craft quarters and markets in Srinagar during the Sultāns.

[65] *Nawādir al- Akhbār*, f. 32b; Śrivara, p. 127; *Shāhjahān - nāma* (text), II, pp.31-32; *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, I, p. 310.

Sultāns leaves no room for doubt that to the people in general Islam might have become associated with economic development.

To sum up, the armchair historian, sitting in the library, scanning the 'contemporary sources' alone, can never come to grips with the different dimensions of Islam in Kashmir during the most formative phase of its history- the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In order to achieve a truer picture, it is necessary to extend one's sources to the widest range of written and unwritten sources. Alongside the 'contemporary sources' it is crucially important to tap the sources having a bearing on medieval Persia and Central Asia as well as the pre-Islamic culture of Kashmir, as Islam came to the Valley from Persia and Central Asia and encountered a deeply rooted local culture. What is more important is that, in the words of Marc Bloch, "one must first look at the present, or what was recently present in order to understand the past."[66] It makes it imperative for the historian to study the records beyond his period of study, immerse himself in the local culture, have at his command the whole battery of qualities of a *participant observer*, tramp the whole Valley, keenly observe the survivals of the past, talk with the local people, listen to and observe oral and practical translations of human moods, beliefs, convictions, values and moral judgments and to enter into dialogue with one's surroundings.

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[66] Marc Bloch, *French Rural History* (tr. by Janet Sondheimer), intr.p. XXVI.

2. Stages in the Spread of Islam in Kashmir

It is now common knowledge that the history of the spread of Islam in Kashmir does not originate with the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate in A.D.1339. The presence of Muslims in Kashmir goes as far back as the eighth century A.D;[1] and some three hundred years before the Sultanate we find Muslims occupying high positions in the army.[2] That Muslims entered the Valley long before 1339 is quite understandable when it is considered that by A.D. 713 Arabs had reached close to the borders of Kashmir and even made many abortive bids to conquer the Valley.[3] More importantly, the whole of Central Asia had come under the sway of Muslims by the end of the eighth century, and the neighbouring territories situated close to the north and west of Kashmir, too, fell to the Muslim armies in the beginning of the eleventh century.[4] To be sure, by the end of the thirteenth century,

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[1] *Chāch - nāma* (Eng. tr. K. F. Mirza), p.160; Kalhana, *Rājataranginī* (Eng. tr. M. A. Stein) iv. 397.

[2] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 188, 1149; viii. 885-887, 2264, 2762-2764, 2782- 2784.

[3] In 713 when Muhammad bin Qasim, the Arab general, occupied Multan he marched towards the frontiers of Kashmir called *Pany Nihayat*. But the threat to Kashmir was averted as the general was recalled by the Caliph Walīd (705-715) to his court. (*Chāch- nāma*, op. cit., PP. 193-94; Balādhuri, *Futūh al- Buldān*, (ed. M. J. De. Gooje), Vol.III, p. 440). Later sometime after 757-58 Hishām bin Amir al Tagblibi, the Arab governor of Sind, also made an attempt to conquer the Valley (Balādhuri, op. cit., pp. 445-46). But owing to its natural frontiers he could not make it. Balādhuri (Ibid., p.446) is supported by no local evidence in his claim that Hishām conquered the Valley.

That Kashmir remained under a great threat of Arab invasion during the first half of the eighth century is also substantiated by the annals of the Tang dynasty, from which we learn that the King of Kashmir, Chandrapida, sent an embassy to the Chinese court to invoke its aid against the Arabs, who were threatening his territories from the north. For details, see M. A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol. I, p.124, fn. 45.

[4] By the territories situated close to the north and west of Kashmir we mean Hindu S'ahi Kingdom and Dardistan. Hindu S'ahi Kingdom extended from the modern Afghnistan to Punjab. This is called Hindu Shahiya empire by al-Bīrūnī. *Kitāb al-*

Kashmir remained the only notable adjoining periphery of Central Asia and northern India that was still ruled by the non-Muslims and continued to be so for the next more than one and a quarter centuries.

Significantly enough, both the non-local and local sources allude to the pouring of Muslims into Kashmir from the eighth century itself. We have it on the authority of a contemporary Arab chronicler,[5] that Muhammad Aláfi, a fugitive Arab commander in the service of Rājā Dāhir[6] (d. 710) and his son Jaisiah, sought refuge in Kashmir for himself and for his corps after he and his patron, Jaisiah failed to checkmate the advance of Arab army. As Aláfi had proved to be a trustworthy lieutenant and adviser of Dāhir and Jaisiah[7] and as the Kashmiri rulers had very intimate relations with the ruling family of Sind,[8] the then Kashmiri ruler, Chandrapida, received Aláfi with great dignity and bestowed upon him the territory of Shakalbār.[9] After Aláfi's death Shakalbār passed on to Jehm, one of the chief men of Aláfi's corps, who constructed many mosques in the area and enjoyed

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Hind, tr. Sachu, Vol. II, p. 336. The small territories bordering the northern frontier of Kashmir, namely, Swat, Hazara, Pakhli, Gilgit. Askardo, Chilas and Astor are collectively called Dardistan. While the S'ahi kingdom including Multan was conquered by Mahmūd of Ghaznī around A.D. 1000, the other small territories in question also seem to have been subsequently brought under Muslim sway by the Ghaznavids. We even find Dardistan, which lies very close to the Kashmir Valley, having embraced Islam not later than the eleventh century (see *Rājataranginī* vii.167-175; viii.2762-64). While invading Kashmir from the side of Loharkot (modern Loharin in the Punch Valley) Mahmūd of Ghaznī also converted the people of Tūhl in Punch (Abu'l Fazl Baihaqī, *Tarikh-i Baihaqī,* I.p. 270) which falls near the western border of Kashmir Valley. For the identification of the place where, according to Abu'l Fazl Baihaqī, Mahmūd converted people to Islam, see M. A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol.I. pp.270-71, fns 47-69.

[5] *Chāch- nāma*, p. 160. It is sometimes erroneously believed that *Chāch- nāma* is the original work of 'Ali bin Hamīd bin Abu Bakar Kūfi. The fact, however, is that Kūfi's work is a translation of the original Arabic work variously known as *Tarikh-i-Hind wa Sind*, *Fath-nāma* and *Minhaj al-Masālik*, written by a contemporary of Muhammad bin Qasim. However, unfortunately the original Arabic work is not extant. It was translated by Kūfi sometime during the first half of the 13th century. For further details, see Elliot and Dowson, *Historians of Sind*, Vol. I. pp. 32–40.

[6] Alāfi was a member of the tribe of Bani Asamah. He belonged to the army of Syria. He had killed Abdur- Rahman, son of Asb-as, for running away from the battle and out of fear (of Khalifah's punishment). had come and joined Dāhir with 500 Arab warriors before the arrival of the Arab army in Sind. *Chāch- nāma*, pp.56, 110.

[7] Ibid., pp. 56, 110-11, 128, 152-53, 160.

[8] Ibid., pp. 28-29, 40, 87.

[9] Shakalbār has been identified by Alexander Cunningham with Kuller Kahār in the salt range which at that time was a part of Kashmir empire *Archaeological Survey of India*, II, p.192 and V, pp. 79-85.

great respect at the Kashmíri court. Considering that this is the earliest and extremely significant evidence about Muslim settlements and beginning of Islam in Kashmir, coming from the pen of a contemporary Arab chronicler, it is tempting to quote the information verbatim:

> When Jaisiah received the news of the approach of the Arab army, he lost no time in leaving the place with his valuables and his family, and passing through a sandy desert, he came to Chankan and Ura. Okayah belonging to the province of Jitor. There Alafi separated from him, and proceeded to the province of Tákiah, and thence, with the intention of taking shelter with the king of Kashmir, came to the frontier of Ráwim, close to Ráwistán. The country was all a desert and an extensive plain. From there he wrote letters to the king of Kashmir whose capital was situated further up in the midst of hills, protesting his sincerity, and praying for a refuge.
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> TheRáná of Kashmir, after reading the letters, ordered one of the towns in the skirts of Kashmir, known by the name of Shakalbár to be granted to Aláfi. Later on when Aláfi paid a visit to the Ráná, the latter gave 50-saddled horses and 200 valuable robes of honour, as presents to his companions. Aláfi then asked Jehm son of Samah Shámi to go with him and remain in the alienated town of Shakalbár. When Aláfi went again to pay a visit to the Rai of Kashmir, the latter again received him with due honour and distinction, and made gifts to him of an umbrella, a chair and a palanquin. Such honour, according to the prevalent custom of those days, was accorded only to kings. He then sent him back with honour and éclat to the land assigned to him, which was situated in a Valley. After some time Aláfi died at Shakalbár and was succeeded by Jehm son of Samah, and his line survives up to this time. He built many mosques and enjoyed great respect and dignity at the Kashmir court.[10]

It is remarkable to note that Rājā Chandrāpida, a Vaiśnava by faith, is delineated by Kalhana as an exceptionally just ruler, free from any religious bigotry.[11] It is, therefore, not surprising to see him warmly receiving the Arab commander and his corps, especially when he had already served Rājā Dāhir and his son Jaisiah. Moreover, his services could be used for defending the borders of Kashmir against the serious threats of Arab invasion.[12] Little wonder, then, that he was given the charge of a frontier area with all freedom to practise and preach his religion.

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[10] *Chach-náma*, p. 160.

[11] *Rājataranginī*. iv. 55sqq.

[12] For details about the perpetual threats of Arab invasion, see fn. 3.

Kalhana also lends support to the proposition of Muslim presence in Kashmir in the eighth century as he writes disparagingly about Rājā Vajrāditya (A.D. 763-770): "He sold many men to the *mlecchas* and introduced into the country practices which befitted *mlecchas*."[13] These *mlecchas* were in all probability Muslim adventurers, fortune seekers and traders as by this time Muslims had been ruling in the neighbouring Sind and Multan for more than fifty years. And it was in the interest of Kashmir to establish friendly relations with Muslims especially when we consider that Kashmir was facing a constant threat of invasion from Sind and Multan. Vajrāditya seems to have realized this ground reality and thus followed a policy of befriending the Muslims. This is besides the fact that Kalhana scornfully portrays him as a non-conformist.[14]

These Muslim traders and settlers needed the help of local working class to carry their trade and render help in their day to day life; but as per the prevailing notions the local people could not associate themselves with these people as they were *mlecchas* and, therefore, disqualified for social interaction. In all probability the Muslims too might have had expressed hesitations to have physical contact with the non-Muslims. It was under these circumstances that Vajrāditya seems to have adopted the same policy as was followed by *Zamorin* of Calicut who allowed as well as encouraged some of his people to embrace Islam to ease the problems of the Muslim traders and settlers.[15] And it is perhaps this policy of Vajrāditya that has been coloured by Kalhana saying that Vajrāditya "sold many men to the *mlecchas*." Since the Muslims needed religious freedom to live according to their own life style, and as the same was granted by Vajrāditya, it is no wonder that the *brāhmana* chronicler castigates the ruler for having "introduced into the country practices which befitted *mlecchas*."

The French scholar, Louis Massignon, author of the celebrated voluminous work, *The Passion of al-Hallāj* (originally in French), provides the revealing information that Mansūr al-Hallāj, the great mystic of Islam, visited Kashmir in A.D. 895 and stayed there for about a year, making inquiries of a doctrinal nature and participating in the religious debates besides looking 'for more or less miraculous techniques':

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[13] *Rājataranginī*, iv. 397.

[14] Ibid., iv. 394-397.

[15] Vide, Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent*, p. 2, fn.5.

> The capital of Qashmir [Kashmir] is the only sure point on Hallāj's itinerary. around 283. in the northwest of India. which we know he reached by way of the sea. either via Daybul (near present-day Karachi). or via the *balad al-shirk*, to the east of Gujrat....We know. through Turūghbādhī [Shaikh Abdallah Turūghbādhī, the Sufi saint of the city of Tus]. that Hallāj returned from Qashmir (via Kabul-Balkh) when he received him (around 284/896 at Tus). Qashmir, under the Karkutaka [Karkota] dynasty. had become an important intellectual center. where Hindus and Turkish Buddhists of the neighboring and allied state of Gandhara (= Qandahar. Wayhind the capital; Hindūshāhī dynasty reigns there from 880 to 1013) mingled with foreign scholars. There was an observatory there. At the court (under the Awantiwarman kings. 857-886, Shankaravarma 886-904). there were religious debates held on the Thura (Torah), the Injīl (Gospels). and the Zābār (Psalms). in the same period as the visit by Hallāj: according to the account of Abū Sa'īd Ghānim-b-Sa'īd Kābulī, who came back via Kabul... and Balkh.... Hallāj's visit to Qashmir proves that he made inquiries of a doctrinal nature in India, and did not only look for more or less miraculous techniques.[15a]

The Muslim immigrations into Kashmir and the contact of Kashmiris with the Muslims of the neighbouring world was disrupted for a brief period towards the beginning of the eleventh century, when the Turkish armies were swooping down on the bordering territories of Kashmir. For fear of Mahmud Ghaznavi's invasions, who made two abortive bids to conquer Kashmir,[16] the rājās of Kashmir fastened their doors and windows and did not allow any one to enter the Valley. Writing about this policy of Kashmiri rulers al-Birūni says, "in former times they used to allow one or two foreigners to enter their country, particularly the Jews, but at present they do not allow even a Hindu whom they did not know personally to enter, much less other people."[17]

However, this policy of sealing the borders was a temporary affair. When the permanent presence of the Muslim power on the borders of Kashmir became a ground reality, with the successive Muslim conquest of Hindu Śahi kingdom (whose territories extended from modem Afghanistan up to Punjab) and the petty principalities bordering the northern frontier of Kashmir, the Hindu rājās found no other alternative but to give concessions to pragmatism. With powerful

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[15a] Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*, Eng. tr. from the French by Herbert Masson ,Vol. I entitled, *The Life of al-Hallaj*, pp. 178-180.

[16] Between 1014 and 1021 Mahmūd of Ghaznī made two attempts to conquer Kashmir, but he failed both the times owing to the strong fortresses of Loharkot and bad weather. Gardīzī, *Zain al Akhbār*, pp. 73-79.

[17] Al-Birūni, *Kitāb al- Hind*, (Eng. tr. E.C. Sachau), Vol. I, p. 206.

Muslim kingdoms on its borders, any hostile policy against the Muslims was incongruous with the changing circumstances and, therefore, counter-productive. The Kashmiri rājās, therefore, revived their old policy – the policy of friendliness towards the Muslims. And pursuant to the new policy, they threw the borders of Kashmir open to adventurous and fortune-seeking Muslims.[18] It is, therefore, not surprising that towards the end of the eleventh century we find an unprecedented increase in the influx of Muslims in Kashmir and consequently a sizable Muslim population in the Valley.[19] More interesting, however, is that we see the Muslims holding high positions in the state apparatus and that too in a sensitive wing of the government, namely, military.[20] To top it all, their number was incredible. Thus there is profuse evidence of Muslim captains being in the army of Ananta[21] (A.D. 1028-1063), Harsa[22] (A.D. 1089-1101), Biksācara[23] (A.D. 1120-21) and Jayasimha[24] (A.D. 1128-1149) and that too in a large number. Kalhana talks of "Turuska captains of hundreds" in the army of Harsa.[25] The number further increased with the passage of time when civil wars became rampant in Kashmir and the Kashmiri rulers and the rival claimants to the throne became more and more dependent upon the support of the Muslims. That is why we find the

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[18] *Rājataraṅgini*. vii. 188, 1149; viii, 885-87, 2264, 2762-64, 2782-2784.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid. The fact that the Kashmiris were unaware of the Turkish war tactics, and, therefore, needed the services of Muslims to train them in this advanced military technology and tactics of warfare, is fairly attested by the following information recorded by Kalhana in the context of Tunga, the Prime Minister of Samgramaraja (1003-1028) who, at the request of Trilocanapala, the S'ahi prince, was sent by the king to help him against Mahmūd of Ghaznī:

> *In the month of Margasirsa the king despatched him (Tunga) to the country of the illustrious S'ahi Trilocanapala, who had asked for help. A large army attended by many Rajaputras, chief councillors, feudal chiefs and others (of rank), capable of making the earth shake followed him. When he, together with his son, had been hospitably received by the S'ahi who had gone to meet him, and had been in that land for five or six days, the S'ahi noticed that they gave no thought to night-watches, the posting of scouts, to military exercises and other (preparations) proper for an attack, and spoke thus to Tunga, who was intoxicated (with self confidence): 'Until you have become acquainted with the Turuska warfare, you should post yourself on the scarp of this hill, (keeping) idle against your desire.'* *Rājataraṅgini*, vii. 47-51.

[21] Ibid., vii. 188.

[22] Ibid., 1149.

[23] Ibid., viii. 885-87, 919-923.

[24] Ibid., viii. 2264.

[25] Ibid., vii. 1149.

Muslims forming an indispensable element of the army of the Hindu rājās of Kashmir;[26] and this is why the rulers as well as the rival factions constantly sought and received the support of the neighbouring Muslim rulers.[27]

The employment of 'hundreds of Muslim captains' in the armies of the Kashmiri kings at the turn of the eleventh century alludes to the presence of a sizable Muslim population in Kashmir more than two hundred years before the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate. It is quite natural to presume that these Muslim captains would have either brought their families along with them[28] or married local girls,[29] both pointing to the presence of a larger Muslim population in Kashmir than is adumbrated in Kalhana's *Rājatarangini*. As these Muslims belonged to a different religion and culture, it is tempting to infer that these settlers would have brought with them different professionals to cater to their daily needs.

While these early Muslim settlers may have settled down at various places in the Valley, they, however, seem to have taken up abode at a particular place in Srinagar, which came to be called as *Mlecch Mar* (the place of *mlecchas*) – the name obviously given to this habitation by the local population. Since this place was called *Mlecch Mar* for many centuries before the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate, it became its permanent place name although the Muslims ruled Kashmir for about five hundred years.[30]

Apart from the fact that there were permanent Muslim settlements in Kashmir, there was also continuous movement of people between Kashmir and the Muslim-ruled neighbouring countries, particularly for trade purposes. It is important to mention that Central Asian horses were in considerable demand in Kashmir and this trade was mainly in the hands of Central Asian Muslims whom we find frequently visiting Kashmir.[31] Similarly, Kashmiri merchants greatly

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[26] Ibid., viii. 2762-64, 2782-84, 2843.

[27] Ibid.

[28] See Jonarāja, op.cit., p. 15 for a Muslim immigrant bringing his family and relations with him.

[29] The matrimonial relations between Hindu and Muslim nobles seem to have been a common phenomenon during the period. See Jonarāja, pp.26-27.

[30] *Mlecch Mar* is today called Malchimar. It is situated near 'Ālī Kadal on the right bank of river Jhelum.

[31] *Rājatarangini*, vii. 493.

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benefitted by trading in Central Asia and other neighbouring countries.[32]

Given the fact that the Muslims who settled in Kashmir and with whom Kashmiris came into contact (both inside and outside the Valley) belonged to the upper echelons of an advanced society, the impact of Islam on Kashmiri Hindus and Buddhists, especially on the ruling elite and trading class, was a natural corollary. There is clear evidence that in the process of hob-nobbing with the neighbouring Muslim rulers some nobles were greatly assimilated into Islam.[33] True, they had political motives in identifying themselves with the Muslim culture. But more than that it was Islam's prestige as a superior culture and the prestige of a successful man's religion which drew them to it. It is, therefore, not surprising to find the fugitive nobles of Lavanya tribe eating "cow's meat in the lands of the *mlecchas*" where they had fled to escape from the wrath of Harsa (A.D. 1089-1111).[34] And it is also not difficult to understand Harsa remodelling the court etiquettes after the luxurious Iranian courts.[35]

Ksemandra, the famous polymath of 11th century Kashmir makes a casual but intriguing mention of the presence of Muslim singers (*mleccha gayānah*) in Kashmir.[36] It is intriguing because the writer refers to the Muslim singers in the context of a courtesan who refuses to accept fee from her clients 'for fear of *mleccha gayānah* who wandered the streets.'[37] These *mleccha* singers were in all probability the *manāqib khawāns* or *fadā'il khawāns*, who besides singing in praise of Allāh extolled the virtues of 'Ali (in case of being Shi'is) and the other companions of the Prophet (in case of being Sunnis) in the streets and bazaars of Iran and Central Asia as a propaganda technique to spread their belief and influence.[38] The *manāqib khawāns*, it may be noted, existed in 'Iraq since the Būyid period (A.D. 932-1055).[39] These *mleccha singers* of the Sanskrit scholar had gained so much prestige

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32 Ibid., vii. 414, 495, 520.

33 Ibid., vii. 1232.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., vii. 923-24.

36 Vide, Moti Chandra, *The World of Courtesans*, Chapter, "The Courtesans of Kashmir," p. 184.

37 Ibid.

38 A. Bausani, "Religion in the Saljuq Period," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (ed. J.A. Boyle) Vol. V, p.293.

39 Ibid.

and influence because of their exemplary piety that the courtesans (who otherwise freely indulged in prostitution under the very nose of local religious *gurus* and state authorities)[40] refused to entertain the clients at their sight.

The use of Sanskritized Persian technical terms like *divāra,*[41] (*Pr. dabīr*), *ganja*[42] (*Pr. ganj*) and *ganjavāra,*[43] (*Pr. gangwār*) by Kalhana (d. 1148-49) to whom everything non-Brāhmanic was abominable, unmistakably points to profound Islamic influence upon Kashmir owing to the considerable Muslim presence and the intimate relations between Kashmir and the neighbouring Muslim-ruled lands.

That by the beginning of the 13th century Muslims formed an important section of the Kashmiri population and that Islamic culture had made great strides is further borne out by a recently discovered copy of the Qur'ān written by one Fatha Allāh Kashmiri in A.D. 1237.[44] It is written in such a fine style and form that according to Muhammad Yūsuf Teng, "it would have taken hundreds of years to the Kashmiri Muslims to attain such a proficiency in Arabic script."[45] What is more significant about this copy of the Qur'ān is that it also contains a Persian translation. The Qur'ān with Persian translation, *interalia*, unmistakably proves the increasing presence of Muslim preachers and their activities in the Valley many centuries before the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate.

Significantly enough, of a very few facts, which Marco Polo chose worth recording about Kashmir, is the existence of a section of Muslims in Kashmir who worked as butchers for Kashmiri non-Muslims:

> The people of the province [Kashmir] do not kill animals, nor spill blood, so if they want to eat meat they get the *saracenes* [Muslims] who dwell among them to play the butcher.[46]

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[40] For details, see Dāmodaragupta, *Kuttanimatam*; Ksemendra, *Narmamālā*; *Samayamātrkā*.

[41] *Rājataranginī*, v.177; vii.119; viii.131

[42] Ibid., iv.589; vii.125-26.

[43] Ibid., v.177.

[44] For details about this MS copy of the Holy Qur'ān, which is preserved in the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, see Muhammad Yūsuf Teng, "Qur'anyat Ki Nādir Dar-yaft: Nuskha'i Fatha-Allāh Kashmiri", in Muhammad Yūsuf Teng, *Shinakht*, pp.6-7.

[45] Ibid.

[46] H. Yule, *Travels of Marco Polo*, I, p. 167.

It is puzzling to notice only Muslims playing butchers for Kashmiri nonMuslims, especially when we know that animal sacrifice (*pasu-yaga*) and eating of meat (*mamsa*) were among the main rituals of Tantricism[47]—the popular religious philosophy of Kashmir much before the birth of the Prophet of Islam—which left a deep imprint upon Kashmiri Brāhmanism.[48] The veracity of Marco Polo's evidence cannot be questioned because it still holds good. The Kashmiri *brāhmanas* are meat eaters all and sundry; but they do not kill animals themselves, instead, they employ Muslims for the purpose. Then the question arises as to who acted as butchers before the *saracenes* (Muslims). There can be no other answer save the one that some local group performed this job. It is, therefore, irresistible to conclude that probably the entire section of the local butchers had embraced Islam by the end of the 13th century. They had a socio-psychological temptation to embrace Islam as they belonged to some lower social group – the stigma that they could not live down, particularly after the revival of Brāhmanism in Kashmir. The fact that the butchers were assigned a lowly station in the society is further substantiated by the fact that because of the stable mental framework this group does not still command a much respectable position in Kashmiri society, although in the new social system they felt elevated as is indicated by the prestigious *krāms* (surnames) as *Ganaie* assumed by the butcher group of Kashmir after embracing Islam.[49] The second plausible inference can be that with the introduction of Muslim butchers by the prestigious Muslim immigrants, the Kashmiri Hindu upper class would have preferred the Muslim butchers to local ones, forcing the latter to adopt the new faith that ensured the security of their hereditary calling.

The streaming of Muslims into Kashmir continued unabated till the Muslim Sultanate was finally established in 1339. One among the lately arrived immigrants was Shāh Mīr, the future founder of the Muslim Sultanate in Kashmir. Coming from the royal family of Swāt, he and his tribe entered Kashmir around 1313 and was bestowed with a land grant and an important position in the administration by the then ruler, Suhadeva (1301-1320).[50]

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[47] V. N. Drabu, *Śaivāgamas*, pp. 97, 143

[48] See *Śaivāgamas* op. cit.,

[49] Almost the whole hereditary butcher section of Kashmiri society carries the *krām* of Ganaie, which originally belonged to the class of scribes. That Ganaie was a blanket term for scribes during medieval times, see *Wāqi'at-i Kashmir* (ed. 1936), p. 84. During our period Ganaie was a noble tribe of Kashmir. Sayyid 'Ali, op.cit., f.9a

[50] Jonarāja, p.15; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 46; Haidar Malik, *Tārīkh-i Kashmir*, pp. 34-35

Since the Hindu rulers greatly depended upon the support of the Muslim commanders and the neighbouring Muslim rulers, Islam did not encounter a hostile political climate in Kashmir. This naturally encouraged the Muslim preachers, (who were watching intently for a favourable land to extend the frontiers of Islam) to enter the beautiful vale of Kashmir. As the Valley was quite favourably disposed towards Muslims especially from the mid eleventh century, it is little wonder, then, to find mention of Muslim saints in the Valley around the same time. However, for want of any contemporary record that would cuddle the Muslim preachers or consider the masses any force to reckon with, only the name of a Suhrawardī saint, Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn commonly known as Bulbul Shāh, has survived to us. He came to Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva.[51] His name was rescued from falling into oblivion by one of his most extraordinary achievements. He was instrumental in converting the reigning Buddhist ruler of Kashmir, Rinchana (A.D. 1320-1323) to Islam. And in order to pay tribute to his memory Rinchana (now Sadar al-Dīn) constructed a *khānaqāh* after his name and endowed it with a rent-free land grant.[52] The *khānaqāh*, which is the first known *khānaqāh* of Kashmir, became so famous that the *muhalla*, where it was built came to be known as Bulbul Langar.[53] Besides the *khānaqāh*, Sultān Sadar al-Dīn also constructed a Jami' mosque in his newly built capital, Rinchanpura (Srinagar).[54]

Considering that Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn came all the way from Turkistan trekking through the difficult and inhospitable mountainous terrain to propagate Islam in an alien and non-Muslim land, and also bearing in mind that he belonged to the institutional phase of Sūfism characterized by *pīr-murīd* relationship, it can be safely inferred that the Suhrawardī saint would have been accompanied by a big group of

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[51] Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn was the disciple of Shah Ni'amat Allāh Fārsī, who in turn was the disciple of Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (1144-1234). Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn was originally from Turkistan. And as directed by his preceptor, he arrived in Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeva. He passed away in 1326 and is buried in Bulbul Langar in Srinagar. *Buhāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 7a; Haidar Malik. pp. 37-38; Bābā Dā'ūd Mishkāti, *Asrār al- Abrār*, ff. 44a-45a.

[52] Ibid. According to Muhammad A'zam Dedamarī, the 18th century chronicler of Kashmir, the *khānaqāh* was functioning normally up to the end of the Sultāns. *Waqi'at-i Kashmir*, op.cit., p.66.

[53] The *muhalla* is today called Bulbul Lankar.

[54] *Buhāristān-i Shāhī*, f.7b; Haidar Malik, p.38. Although the original mosque was gutted in a fire, mosques, however, continued to be built on the original site and invariably carried the name of the original mosque, viz. *Rinchoo Masjid*. The present mosque which, too, stands on the original site is also famous by this name.

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murīds (disciples) and *khudām* (ancillary staff) as was commonplace with every religious mission of the time.

The conversion of the ruler to Islam marked a turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir. Not only did Islam now receive political patronage but also became a 'reference group culture'– a status-improving way of life, as the Muslim was elevated from a *mleccha* to a monarch. This is besides the fact that the conversion of the ruler would have validated the religious superiority of Islam vis-a-vis other religions of the period with obvious consequences. In this connection it should be borne in mind that Rinchana embraced Islam after having discussions with the Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim religious personages of the period.[55] All in all, therefore, Rinchana's conversion to Islam was followed by the conversion of a large number of people including his Hindu Prime Minister, Rāwanchandra[56] who also happens to be the predecessor of a very influential noble family of Chandān, famous as Rainas in our sources.[57]

Yet, the fervour, with which Islam spread during the period of Rinchana, could not last long as the ruler died hardly two years after his conversion[58] and the throne again passed into the hands of the Hindus, who ruled for another sixteen years[59] till the Sultanate was finally established in Kashmir in 1339 by Shāh Mīr, who had by then established a strong position in the government.[60]

It may be pertinent to mention here that Shāh Mīr's accession to the throne was a normal transition of power from a weak king to a powerful noble who managed it with the help of the local populace including the grandees.[61] The accession of Shāh Mīr to the throne of a predominantly Hindu country without any resistance from the natives speaks volumes about the disillusionment of Kashmiri people with their leadership.

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[55] For the fact that Rinchana had discussions with the religious divines of different faiths, see *Bahāristān-i Shāhi*, ff.6b, 7a; Haidar Malik, p.37. To undermine Rinchana's conversion to Islam Jonarāja has fabricated the story that the *brāhamana* Devasavami refused to initiate him into Hinduism on the ground that he was a "Bhotta" (Tibetan Buddhist) and, therefore, unworthy of such initiation (Jonarāja, pp. 20-21). Thus Jonarāja vainly tries to make us believe that there was no scope for conversion from Buddhism to Hinduism and that Devasavami was the only religious authority in Kashmir to initiate some one to Hinduism.

[56] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.7b; Haidar Malik, op. cit., p.38.

[57] Haidar Malik, op. cit., p. 41.

[58] Jonarāja, p. 23.

[59] After the death of Rinchana in 1323 Udayanadeva, the brother of Suhadeva was installed on the throne of Kashmir and he ruled till 1339. Jonarāja, pp. 25-27.

[60] Ibid. For the praises which a staunch *brāhamana* like Jonarāja bestows upon Shāh Mīr, see Jonarāja, p. 26.

Sultān Shamas al-Dīn Shāh Mīr and his immediate successors do not seem to have shown any remarkable zeal in the spread of Islam. They were primarily interested in consolidating their political authority, which was not possible without the wholehearted co-operation of the Hindus. The need for befriending the Hindus was felt to such an extent that the founder of the Sultanate entered into matrimonial relations with the Hindu nobility.[62] And in order to further consolidate his position he raised to prominence two families – Māgreys and Chaks.[63] This policy of befriending the nobility augured well for Islam, as we find Māgreys and many other nobles dedicated followers of Islam, so much so that they won the confidence of the great Muslim preacher, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdāni who entered the Valley in 1383-84.[64]

During the reign of Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn (1354-1373) the process of Islamization got activated again primarily because of the arrival of four Kubrāvī Sūfis, accompanied by their families and followers. They were Sayyid Hussain Simnānī, Sayyid Tāj al-Din, Sayyid Hasan Bahādur and Sayyid Haidar. These Sayyids were close relations and *murīds* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdāni.[65] They were sent by the Sayyid as an advance party with a special mission to see and report to him whether Kashmir provided favourable conditions for preaching Islam.[66] Sayyid 'Ali himself waited at Ghaur (Afghanistan) for the reply.[67] These

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[61] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[62] Ibid.

[63] *Tarikh-i-Firishta* (Nawal Kishore edition), p.338.

[64] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdāni bestowed the coveted position of '*Alamdāri* (carrier of banner of Islam) upon Ladi Magray, the head of the Magray tribe. Sayyid 'Ali, op.cit., ff. 7b, 8a, 9a-9b; *Bahāristāni Shāhi*, f.11b. Another noble of Kashmir who became one of the close disciples of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī was Malik Devi Ganaie. Sayyid 'Ali, op. cit. f. 9a. Since the Dards had long back embraced Islam, Langar Chak (the ancestor of the Chaks of Kashmir) who had migrated to Kashmir from Dardistan during the reign of Suhadeva (*Bharistan-i-Shahi*, f.46.) was in all probability a Muslim, which perhaps helped the tribe to gain special patronage from Sultān Shamas al-Dīn Shāh Mīr.

[65] Sayyid Hussain Simnānī and Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn were the cousins of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdāni; Sayyid Hasan Bahādur was the son of Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn and Sayyid Haidar was the nephew of Sayyid Hussain Simnānī. Sayyid 'Ali, op.cit., f.1a.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

Sayyids were accorded warm welcome by the Sultān who also bestowed on them *madad-i mo'āsh* grants to ensure their comfortable stay in the Valley.[68] Having informed Sayyid 'Ali of the conducive political climate of Kashmir,[69] they along with their followers settled in the Valley.[70] At the request of Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn, Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn and his son Sayyid Hasan took up their abode in the newly built capital of the Sultān – Shihābpura in *Shahr* (Srinagar).[71] The Sultān became *murīd'i khas* of Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn and built a mosque in his name.[72] After Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Bulbul Shāh, the second prominent Sūfī who carried on missionary work in *Shahr* was Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn. It was under the influence of this Sayyid that Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn opened many *maktabs*,[73] established a *khānaqāh*,[74] and constructed a graveyard[75] in *Shahr*. While Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn and Sayyid Hasan lived in the capital city, Sayyid Hussain Simnānī and his nephew Sayyid Haidar settled in Kulgām and opened a *khānaqāh* there for whose maintenance Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn endowed Kulgām as *madad-i mo'āsh* grant.[76] Sayyid Hussain Simnānī is famous for having won large-scale conversions in the area.[77] The oral tradition in this regard and the high estimation in which the saint is held by the people of the area further substantiate the written sources.[78] It is pertinent to mention here that the conversion of the father of the famous saint of our period, Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, is also attributed to Sayyid Hussain Simnānī.[79]

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[68] Ibid., ff. 2ab.

[69] It is important to mention that it was only after receiving encouraging report from Sayyid Hussain and Sayyid Tāj al- Dīn that Sayyid 'Ali left for Kashmir. Sayyid 'Ali, f.3a.

[70] There is a graveyard in the outskirts of Kulgām at village Āmamoo, where, according to local tradition, three hundred and sixty people comprising Sayyid Hussain Simnānī's family, disciples and men belonging to various professions who accompanied the Sayyid, lie buried. Even today the people point to the graves of physician, barber and cook. The women folk of the Sayyid family are buried at a separate place known as *Bibikhānā*. The graveyard which stretches over two hundred and ten kanals of land is said to have been purchased from a Hindu potter. The revenue document in this regard lies with the custodians of the *khanaqah* of Sayyid Hussain Simnānī.

[71] Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn, Sayyid Hasan and their families are also buried at Shihābpura (now called Shihāmpūr). They are buried beside the mosque known as Masjid-i-Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn.

[72] Sayyid 'Ali, f.3a; *Bahāristāni Shāhī*, f. 10a. Although the original mosque does not exist, mosque after mosque continued to be constructed on the old site and named after the original mosque. And no wonder that there still exists a mosque known after the name of the originall mosque – Masjidi-i-Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn.

[73] Aba Rafi al Dīn, *Nawadir al-Akhbar*, f. 23a.

[74] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 10a; Abdu'l Wahāb Nūri, *Fathāt-i Kubrāviyya*, f. 69b; *Tārīkh-i Hasan*, Vol. III, pp. 6-7.

[75] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.10a.

[76] Sayyid 'Ali, f.2b.

[77] *Asrār al Abrār*, op.cit., f. 33b.

There is, however, little doubt that even after the lapse of fifty years since the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate and in spite of the presence of the Muslim preachers for a pretty long time, the Muslims still formed only a microscopic minority of Kashmir.[80] And what is more, their life pattern including that of the ruling family was not different from that of the Hindus.[81] Since in comparison to the vast majority of the non-Muslims, the Muslims constituted only a very thin slice of the population and since the dominant majority of the ministers were non-Muslims,[82] the Muslim community had virtually adopted a Hindu way of life, to the extent that they were even worshipping idols, celebrating the Hindu festivals, and dressing themselves after the Hindu fashion.[83] According to *Bahāristān-i Shāhi* there were no such righteous '*ulamā*' who could, without hesitation, guide the people in accordance with the *Shari'ah*. This is why the Muslims were seen openly disregarding the well-known Islamic injunctions with impunity.[84] As late as 1383-84 we find the Sultān of the time, in flagrant violation of the *Shari'ah*, wedded to two sisters simultaneously.[85] To be sure, at the advent of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, Islam in Kashmir just hung on to its eyelids.

The year 1384 marks a turning point in the history of Islam in Kashmir as it witnessed the arrival of a well-organized Islamic mission under the leadership of a great Sūfī master, an erudite scholar, a prolific and versatile writer and a widely travelled missionary, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, popularly known in Kashmir by various reverential titles as *Amīr-i Kabīr, Shāh-i Hamdān, Bānī-e Islām, Bānī-e Mussalmānī* and

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[78] Sayyid Hussain Simnānī is the most revered saint of Kulgām. He is reverently called 'Bādshāh-i Simnān.' It is interesting as well as revealing to collect the folk tradition current in the area which attests to the people's high reverence for the saint.

[79] Moti Lal Saqi, *Kulliyat-i Shaikh al-'Ālam*, p. 22. According to popular tradition the name of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn's father was Salār Sanz. However, after conversion he adopted the name of Shaikh Salār. See also *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p.64.

[80] Sayyid 'Ali, op. cit., f.5a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.11a; Haidar Malik, p. 42.

[81] Ibid. Also see Jonarāja, p.53.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 10b, 11a.

[85] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 11a; Haidar Malik, p. 42.

'Ali-e Thanī.[86] Accompanied by about seven hundred followers,[87] a majority of whom were great religious divines,[88] the Kubrāvī saint launched a vigorous movement of Islamizing Kashmir. As a Kubrāvī he initiated the mission by bringing all his energies to bear upon the ruler as the symbol of Islamic life.[89] The Sayyid succeeded in persuading the reigning Sultān, Sultān Qutub al-Dīn, to give up his un-Islamic way of life. Consequently, the Sultān dressed himself after the Muslim fashion, abandoned visiting Hindu temples and divorced one of the two sisters he was married to.[90] The Sayyid assigned the task of teaching Islam to the Sultān and his family to one of his foremost disciples, who was asked to settle in the Valley permanently.[91] To be sure, the emphasis on the Islamization of the royal family and the court as a pre-requisite for Islamizing the people was an important *modus operandi* adopted by Sayyid 'Ali and his disciples.[92]

Minus enforcing the *Shari'ah* in state matters, as desired by the Sayyid but not implemented owing to political compulsions,[93] the Sultān accorded highest respect to the saint. This is amply evidenced by a *manqabat* and a *rubā'i* (quatrain) composed by the Sultān in his honour.[94]

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[86] For details about Sayyid 'Ali's life and works, see *Sufism in Kashmir*, op.cit., pp. 28-85; Shams al- Dīn Ahmad, *Shāh-i Hamdan–Hayat aur Karnamai*; Sayyida Ashraf Zafar, *Sayyid Mir 'Ali Hamdanī*. It is however, important to mention here that none of the contemporary works makes a mention of the supposed three visits of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī to Kashmir referred to by the later sources, such as *Tārīkh-i Hasan* (written in 1890) and *Tārīkh-i Kabīr* (written in 1903-4) and accepted naively by some modern historians, namely, G.M.D. Sofi (*Kashir* I, pp. 86-98) and Mohibbul Hasan (*Kashmir Under the Sultāns*, pp. 55-56). For the fact that the Sayyid visited Kashmir only once, see the contemporary and near contemporary works, namely, Mulla Haidar Badakhshī, *Manqabat al Jawāhir*, ed. by G. M. Shāh. Unpublished M.Phil. thesis CCAS, Kashmir University, pp. 245-252, 301-304; Sayyid 'Ali, f.3a; *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 236, 252; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.10b; Haidar Malik, p.42; *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, pp. 432-33; *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, III, p.185. A.Q. Rafiqi is the first modern historian who has put the records straight in this regard. See *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp. 35-36.

[87] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5b.

[88] For some prominent Sayyids who accompanied Sayyid 'Ali, see Appendix I.

[89] Sayyid 'Ali, f.5a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 10b, 11a; Haidar Malik, p. 42.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 6a.

[92] This was in accordance with the religious thought of the Kubrāvīs. Shaikh 'Ala al-Daula Simnānī, (1261-1336), one of the greatest Kubrāvī saints, lamented over giving up government service because he believed that he could have served God better by serving the ruler. Cf. *Sufism in Kashmir*, intro. p. XLIV.

[93] *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, p. 257; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.11b.

[94] Haidar Badakhshi, *Manqabat al Jawāhir*, op. cit., pp. 303-304.

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The Sayyid also gifted a cap to the Sultān, which he always wore under his turban as a high mark of reverence for the Sayyid. The practice was continued by his successors till it was buried with the dead body of Sultān Fateh Shāh (1486-93) as per his *wasiya* (last will).[95] In deference to the wishes of the saint the Sultān also constructed a *suffa* (raised floor) at 'Alā' al-Dīnpūra (Srinagar), for congregational prayers. And it was on this *suffa*, where Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī established five times prayers and recited the *aurad*, that the famous Khānaqāh-i-Mu'alla was constructed during the reign of Sultān Sikandar.[96]

It is true that as a policy the Sayyid gave first preference to winning over the Sultān and his nobles, for he was a firm believer of the view that "the common people imitate the behaviour and culture of their rulers."[97] And it is also true that he first concentrated on converting the people of *Shahr* because of the paramount role of the cities as catalysts of social change. However it would be difficult to agree with Prof. Ishaq Khan who argues that the activities of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī remained "confined to royal circles" and "in and around the capital" because the Sayyid stayed in Kashmir for a brief period and that "he does not seem to have established any mass contacts" in view of "the language barrier".[98] It is true that the Sayyid stayed in Kashmir for not more than a year.[99] But considering the small size and extent of the Valley, where even an extreme village can be visited, in the words of Walter Lawrence, 'in a day's [horse] ride,'[100] it was not difficult for the Sayyid, to whom 'travel and preach' was the 'God's command'[101] to cover its major centres of Hinduism within a few months. That Sayyid 'Ali visited different places of the Valley, beyond the confines of medieval Srinagar, is not only attested to by the untapped folklore but also by the earliest available Persian work of Kashmir – *Tārīkh-i Kashmir* of Sayyid 'Ali – which incidentally refers to the Sayyid's missionary sojourn to and activities at Pampōr, Letapōr, Awantipōr and Bijbehara in the South Kashmir.[102] Conversion of masses to Islam did not require making them understand the "esoteric and exoteric version of Islam" – the impression created by Prof. Ishaq Khan to support his thesis.[103] By contrast, the mass conversion required practical demonstration of the tangible difference between what the masses were made to believe in and what the new religion was all about. And the great saint, who preferred rags to riches, lived a straitlaced life, rejected worldly possessions, championed the cause of the poor, crusaded to build a just society, and who was an ardent advocate of the Qur'ānic injunction: "The best in the eyes of Allah is the most pious of you", had sufficient to offer it more through example than precept.[104] It may be worthwhile to mention here that the Sayyid preached against the social evils and problems such as unsatiated lust for worldly things and desires, vanity, conceit, pride, cruelty, anger, vengeance, injustice, dishonesty, perfidy, jealousy, selfishness, lying, immodesty, apathy towards the condition of the poor and needy, ill treatment towards parents, wives, children, servants and slaves, unjust nature of the state and the like, in so simple words and by quoting tangible and transparent common day to day examples that even an ordinary man in the street would have comprehended it easily.[105] It is also relevant to mention here that the Sayyid was highly conscious of the fact that the common people need to be preached in common way. As a matter of fact, he impressed upon the rulers that they should not get offended by the uncivilized behaviour of the common people, for "they should not expect the same behaviour from a man residing in mountains which is observed by noblemen."[106]

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[95] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 6a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 10a; Haidar Malik, p. 42.

[96] Ibid.

[97] *Dhakhīrat al- Mulūk* (Urdu tr. by Shams al-Dīn Ahmad under the title, *Dhakhīr-i Sa'ādat*), Vol I, p.196.

[98] Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, pp. 67-68.

[99] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī came to Kashmir in 1384 (*Manqabat al- Jawāhir*, pp. 303-304; Sayyid 'Ali, f.3a) and he passed away in 1385, a few days after he had left Kashmir, while on the way to Central Asia (Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 8b, 9b).

[100] Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 2, 6.

[101] Ja'far Badakhshī, *Khulāsat al- Manāqib*, p. 573.

[102] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 7a, 7b.

True, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī won large conversions both within and without *Shahr* (Srinagar). We not only find the Sultān and the noble families like Māgreys, Ganāies, and Chandān becoming his dedicated *murīds*[107] but the great *guru* of Kali Mandir (Srinagar) and his thousands of followers also embraced Islam at his hands.[108] When the Sayyid could convert great political and religious personalities of the capital city, his preaching at other places beyond *Shahr* would have proved more successful as the culture of *Shahr* has always been a touchstone for attitude formation and self-evaluation for the rest of the people of Kashmir.[109] Yet, in order to convert the whole populace of Kashmir he parcelled out the Valley into different zones and assigned them to his most learned disciples for launching a sustained movement of promoting conversion in their respective areas.[110]

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[103] Ishaq Khan, Ibid., p. 68

[104] For greater details about ethical, social, cultural, economic, political and religious teachings of Sayyid 'Ali, see his *Dhakhīrat al- Mulūk*

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid., p. 192.

[107] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 9a; *Baharastān-i Shāhī*, f. 11b; Haidar Malik, pp.42-43

[108] *Manqabat al Jawāhir*, pp. 301-304; Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 4b-5a.

Sayyid 'Ali is not only the first Muslim missionary to have converted a good number of people to Islam but he is also a pioneer Muslim preacher the other way round too. He is the first to have launched a movement of total Islamization of the life pattern of the people as unlike the other preachers he was not satisfied with mere ritualistic conversion. This is evident not only from his persuasive teachings, leading to the change of life style of the then reigning Sultān of Kashmir, but also from his monumental work, *Dhakhīrat al- Mulūk*, in which he presents Islam as a comprehensive *zabta'i hayāt* (code of life) and persuades the Muslims to follow Islam in every walk of life. Interestingly, we find him guiding the Muslims even on such matters as how to sit and walk.[111] That he was the first Muslim preacher to win a large population to Islam, to present Islam as a complete *zabta'i hayat*, to lay a solid intellectual and organisational foundation for Islamization of Kashmiri society, to extend the frontiers of Islam beyond the capital city and to rescue Islam from being dissolved in the melting pot of Hinduism, it is no wonder that in Kashmir he is popularly known as *Bānī-e Islam* (founder of Islam in Kashmir) or *Bānī-e Mussalmani* (founder of the Muslim creed in Kashmir) though, as we have seen, Islam had entered the Valley long before him, and Kashmir had witnessed religious divines like Bulbul Shah. Probably no words can better express the contribution of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī towards the Islamization of Kashmir than the glowing tributes paid to him by the then poet-ruler, Sultān Qutub al-Dīn:

جانم فدای بر قدم خاک تو بادا یا امیر   روحم فدای بر شرف نام تو بادا یا امیر
از آمدنت مشرف به اسلام گشته ام   چشمم فدای بر آمدن تو بادا یا امیر
خواهم که روز حشر شفاعت کنی مرا   هر چار عنصر فدای اسم تو بادا یا امیر
قطبی اگرچه کرد گناهان ز حد و عد   آخر مرا نصیب شفاعت تو بادا یا امیر

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[109] See *Rājataranginī*, iv. 349 for the emulation of city culture by the villagers in order to claim a membership of the high culture, which is, however, resented by the town elite for vested interests.

[110] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 6b-8a.

[111] See *Dhakhīrat al- Mulūk* for Sayyid 'Ali's inveterate desire to see the Muslim ruled countries, and obviously Kashmir too, as truly Islamic States. Also see Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5b; *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, p. 257; Haidar Malik, p. 42.

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چو آمد آن شه از ملک ولایت　　گرفت کشمیر از اسلام رایت
بگفتند از که یافت تربیت این ملک　　ازان گفتم که ازان شاه هدایت

May my life be consigned at your feet, O Amīr,
May my soul be sacrificed for the grandeur of your name.
Your advent led me into the fold of Islam,
May my eyesight serve in the path of your coming.
I wish you could intercede for me on the Day of Judgement;
My four elements are all for you, O Amīr.
Although Qutubī has committed sins beyond limit and number,
May in the end, your intercession comes to my rescue.

o

As that king came from the realm of guardianship,
The standard of Islam was raised in Kashmir.
They asked "Who has educated this country?"
I replied, "[It was educated] by that king of guidance."[112]

This, however, does not mean that during the brief spell of his stay in Kashmir Sayyid 'Ali changed the Hindu Kashmir into Muslim Kashmir. Doubtless, he laid a strong foundation for such a mission, but he left it to his disciples and other zealous preachers to accomplish it. The majority of the population including a great number of ministers were still outside the fold of Islam. That is why, as mentioned above, Sultān Qutub al-Dīn could not implement the *Sharī'ah* as suggested by Sayyid 'Ali.

Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's mission was largely fulfilled by his son, Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī who came to Kashmir in 1393 along with his three hundred disciples.[113] Like a true Kubrāvī, his first priority was to win the Sultān to his ideas; and for this purpose he gave daily lessons to him[114] and wrote a book on Sūfism for him.[115] It was on account of Mīr Muhammad's persuasive teachings that Sultān Sikandar (1389-1413) Islamized the administration.[116] However, the most vital success which Mīr Muhammad achieved was that he won many nobles to Islam, the most important being Suhabhatta, the Prime Minister of the Sultān.[117]

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[112] *Manqabat al Jawāhir*, pp. 303-304.

[113] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 12b; Muhammad A'zam Didamarī, op.cit., p. 42; *Fathāt-i Kubrāviyya*, f. 62b.

[114] Jonarāja, p. 57.

[115] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 11a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 25.

[116] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 14b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 12b; Haidar Malik p. 44.

[117] Jonarāja, p. 59; Sayyid 'Ali, f. 14b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 12b; Haidar Malik, p. 44.

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With the whole-hearted support of the nobility, the Sultān enforced the *Shari'ah* and banned dancing of women, gambling and playing of musical instruments.[118] The foundation of Islam was made stronger by the creation of a network of Islamic institutions. Key among these were *madrasas*, legal schools, *fatwā* organisations, mosques and *khānaqāhs*.[119] While himself staying in Kashmir for twelve years and working actively for Islam,[120] Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī, like his father, also assigned the work of preaching and teaching to his disciples by making them settle in different parts of the Valley.[121] As a matter of fact, Islamic culture reigned supreme during the period of Sultān Sikandar owing to the sovereign influence exercised upon him by Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī. Shocked at this change, Jonarāja could not help penning down his ructions, which, however, help us in getting an idea of the role of Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī and his mission in Islamizing Kashmir:

> It was perhaps owing to the sins of the subjects that the king had the fondness for the *Yavanas*, even as a boy has a fondness for mud. Many *Yavanas* left other sovereigns and took shelter under this king who was renowned for charity, even as bees leave the flowers and settle on elephants. As the bright moon is among the stars, so was Mahammada [Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī] of Mera country among these *Yavanas*; and although he was a boy, he became their chief by learning. The king waited on him daily, humble as a servant, and like a student he daily took his lessons from him. He placed Mahammada before him, and was attentive to him like a slave. As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts the *shali* crop so did the *Yavanas* destroy the usages of Kashmira.[122]

It is pertinent and equally important to mention here that notwithstanding Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī's fervid proselytizing zeal shared by Sultān Sikandar too, Islam would not have made much progress without the whole-hearted support of the neo-converts who turned out to be

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118 Sayyid 'Ali ff. 14a-b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff 12a-b; Haidar Malik, p.44.

119 Of the mosques and *khānaqāhs* built during the period of Sikandar, *Jami Masjid* and *Khānaqāh-i Mu'alla* at Srinagar are worth mentioning. Sayyid 'Ali, f. 13a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 16b; Haidar Malik, p.44. For the maintenance of the *khānaqāh*, three villages, viz; Tral, Vachi and Nonawani were endowed to it. Sayyid 'Ali, f.13a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 16a. It was also during the reign of Sikandar that the office of *Shaikh al-Islām* was instituted in Kashmir. *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 16ab.

120 Sayyid 'Ali says that during the period of Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī's twelve years' stay in Kashmir no work having religious bearing was done without seeking his prior approval. Sayyid 'Ali f.14b.

121 Ibid., ff.1b, 29a, 29b.

122 Jonarāja, p. 57.

phenomenal zealots. In fact the zeal of the preachers looks simply pale before the zeal of the converts won by them. The role played by the convert Prime Minister, Suhabhatta (now Saif al-Dīn) in this regard is indicative of the fervour of the proverbial convert. According to Jonarāja, "Suhabhatta who disregarded the acts enjoined by the Śastras, and was instructed by the *mlecchas*, instigated the king to break down the images of gods."[123] It is worth noting that when Suhabhatta (Saif al-Dīn) became the virtual ruler during the reign of 'Ali Shāh (1413-1420), he gave the fullest expression to his antipathy against the Brāhmanic religion, a detailed account of which is given in the following Chapter. Suffice it to say that he imposed *jaziya* upon the *brāhmanas*,[124] "forbade ceremonies and processions during the new moon,"[125] "withheld allowance of the twice-born,"[126] "reviled the Śastras",[127] "did mischief to the gods",[128] and "ordered all the guards on the roads not to allow any passage to any one without a written passport"[129] so that the *brāhmanas* did not flee from the country, but even then, according to Jonarāja, a multitude of *brāhmanas* did flee to 'foreign countries'.[130]

Sultān Zain al- 'Ābidīn's long reign of fifty years (1420-1470) is remembered for exemplary religious liberty enjoyed by each community. Such was the Sultān's keen desire to see all his subjects live a happy life that he extended invitation to all those *brāhmanas* who had fled in panic to return; and he also allowed all those who had embraced Islam under duress to revert to their own faith,[131] albeit the sources are silent about re-conversions. It is, however, noteworthy that alongside the Sultān's patronage to Hindus and Hinduism, Islamic culture added more lustre to its name during the reign of the Sultān owing to the influx of a galaxy of Muslim saints, scholars, engineers, litterateurs, poets, artisans and craftsmen[132] and also in the wake of the establishment of a network of *madrasas* and *khānaqāhs*.[133] After all, it was the Sultān's intense desire to bring Kashmir on a par with the most advanced Muslim countries like Samarqand and Bukhārā; which is why he left no stone unturned to attract talent and to import technology and literature from distant lands of the Muslim world.[134] Since the royal family, the nobles and the majority of the ministers upheld Islamic faith and since the Muslim culture blossomed to full glory during the half-century rule of the Sultān, Islam naturally became a normative faith to imitate, notwithstanding the *roonaq* (efflorescence) and *ahiya* (revival) of Hindu culture.[135] Yet, the Islam that was popularised during the fifty years' rule of Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn was fundamentally eclectic consequent upon the patronage of the Hindu culture by the Sultān.

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[123] Ibid., p. 59.

[124] Ibid., p. 65.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid., p. 67

[127] Ibid., p. 68.

[128] Ibid., p. 61.

[129] Ibid., p. 66.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Jonarāja (Bo. ed), St. 1048. Vide, N. K. Zutshi, *Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir*, p. 69; Nizam al-Dīn Ahmad, *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* (tr. B. De. and B. Prassad) Vol. III, p. 655.

[132] Śrivara, pp. 135-151; Sayyid 'Ali, f 16b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* f. 23a; Haidar Malik, p.46.

[133] Haidar Malik, p. 47; Sufi, *Kashir*, II, pp. 347-48

It was in this atmosphere of symbiotic syncretism that the indigenous Sūfī movement known as the Rishi movement branched out in Kashmir with great éclat under the inspiring leadership of its founder Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn (1379-1442).[136] The Shaikh, who was influenced by the erstwhile local *Rishis*[137] as well as by Islamic mysticism, lived an extremely austere life.[138] He preached against worldly allurements

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[134] See Mohammad Ashraf Wani, "Modes of Technology and Culture Transfer from Central Asia to Kashmir" in B.K.Deambi (ed.), *Kashmir and Central Asia*, pp.67-69.

[135] For the revival of Hindu culture during the reign of Zain al-'Ābidīn, see Jonarāja, *passim*; Śrivara, *passim*; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 27ab

[136] For a detailed account about the life and teachings of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn and his Rishi Movement, see *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp.134-168; *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, pp. 95-135.

[137] Almost all Sūfī writers of medieval Kashmir agree that the Rishi order was an ancient mystic order of Kashmir and that Shaikh Nūr al- Dīn Islamized it. (Bābā Nasib. *Nūr- nāma* f.142b; *Asrār al Abrār*, f. 62b. *Waqi't-i Kashmir*, p. 63). It is also worth noticing that the very term *Rishi* is a Sanskrit word (*Waqi't-i Kashmir*, p. 63). Added to this we have a clear mention of the existence of a mystic movement among Kashmiri Hindus having close affinity with the Rishi order of our period. It was so famous that Marco Polo has also given it a place in his famous travel account. To quote him:

> 'They [Kashmiris] have amongst them a particular class of devotees, who live in communities, observe strict abstinence in regard to eating, drinking and the intercourse of the sexes and refrain from every kind of sexual indulgence, in order that they may not give offence to the idols whom they worship. These persons live to a considerable age. Manuual Komroff, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, p.64.

[138] While believing that *nafs* (lust) is the main hurdle in achieving righteous path, the Shaikh chose to be strictly vegetarian and did not touch any sumptuous dish. He lived on wild vegetables, wore ragged garments (*Janda*), strictly abstained from sex and had no earthly attachment: family, ~~home, property, etc~~. See Sayyid 'Ali f. 49a, *Nūr- nāma*, f. 157b; *Asrār al Abrār*, *f. 64b*; *Ā'īn-i Akbari*, (text) pp. 351-52;

(*lūb*), vanity (*ahankār*), hypocricy, jealousy (*krūdh*) and misuse of religion for petty mundane gains. He was also a strong opponent of polytheism, social discrimination and ritualism.[139] He preached his message by going from place to place and having discussions with the people.[140] The most effective means which made his movement pervasive throughout the Valley was the language and the genre he used to bring home to the people his message. He used common man's language – *Kōshur* – and the piercing mode of expression – poetry.[141]

Because of his charismatic and saintly personality, persuasive teachings and strong abhorrence of worldly things, Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn won many conversions to Islam, the most significant being Bhum Sādh, a prominent *brāhmana* ascetic,[142] Zia Singh, a descendent of the royal family of Kishtwār[143] and Ladī Raina, the chief of *pargana* Maru-Ādvin.[144] Bhum Sādh was named as Bām al-Din, Zia Singh as Zain al-Dīn and Ladi Raina as Latīf al-Dīn. It may be mentioned that Bābā Bam al-Dīn, Bābā Zain al-Dīn, Bābā Latif al-Dīn and his other immediate disciple Bābā Nasir al-Dīn[145] became the four prominent *khulfa* of the Shaikh, who like their spiritual preceptor chose to live away from the hustle and bustle of life and won many followers.[146] Thus a big brotherhood of Rishis was created[147] who carried on the mission of the Shaikh generation after generation.[148] Abu'l Fazl and Emperor Jahāngīr were highly impressed by the selflessness, other-worldliness, tolerance, philanthropy, vegetarianism and celibacy of the

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Kulliyāt-i Shaikh al-'Ālam, I, p 26. For further details, see *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp. 134-158; *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, pp. 95-135.

[139] Ibid.

[140] The memory of the Shaikh's visits to different villages of Kashmir is preserved in the folklore as well as in the shrines constructed over the spots where the Shaikh is believed to have stayed for some time.

[141] For the poetic compositions of the Shaikh, see Moti Lal Saqi, *Kulliyāt-i Shaikh al-'Ālam*, 2 vols; Mohammad Amin Kamil, *Nūr-nāma*; Asadallāh Āfāqī, *Āin-i-Haq* and *T'alimat-i-Shaikh al-'Ālam*, 2 vols.

[142] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 32b-33a, 37b-38ab; *Nūr-nāma*, op. cit., 98a-108ab See also *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp 159-164. *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, pp. 108-182.

[143] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 36a-37b; Bābā Nasib, f. 12ab.

[144] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 39a; Bābā Nasib, f 14a; Dā'ūd Mishkātī, f. 96a.

[145] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 40b-41a.

[146] For details about these four immediate companions of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn and their disciples, see *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp. 158-174.

[147] See Appendix III.

[148] According to Jahāngīr there were 2000 Rishis in the Valley towards the early decades of seventeenth century. *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (R&B) II, 149-50.

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Rishis, which had earned them the most respectable position in the society. To quote Abdu'l Fazl:

> The most respectable class in this country [Kashmir] is that of the Rishis, who notwithstanding their need of freedom from the bonds of tradition and custom, are true worshippers of God. They do not loosen the tongue of calumny against those not of their faith, nor beg nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees, and are generally a source of benefit to the people. They abstain from flesh-meat and do not marry. There are about two thousand of this class.[149]

Jahāngīr corroborates Abu'l Fazl:

> There [in Kashmir] is also a body of Faqīrs whom they call *Rishis*. Though they have not religious knowledge or learning of any sort, yet they possess simplicity, and are without pretence. They abuse no one, they restrain the tongue of desire, and the foot of seeking; they eat no flesh, they have no wives, and always plant fruit-bearing trees in the fields, so that men may benefit by them, themselves deriving no advantage. There are about 2,000 of these people[150]

While highlighting the role of Rishis in winning conversions, Prof. Ishaq Khan believes that the majority of the commoners, especially the rural folk, were brought to the fold of Islam not by the missionaries of Persia and Central Asia, but by the Rishis.[151] Notwithstanding the exaggeration of the statement, the fact remains that the illiterate folk, who had already been brought under the fold of Islam, understood the pith of the message of the new religion through the popular verses of Nūr al-Dīn, dinned into their ears by his committed followers– the Rishis. It is probably for this reason that the didactic poetry of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn has been elevated to the position of *Kōshur Qur'ān* (Qur'ān in Kashmiri) by Kashmiri Muslim folk.

Though it is difficult to say when exactly Kashmir became a Muslim society, it is, however, clear that towards the end of the fifteenth-century Muslims were in the preponderant majority. There were still conversions to come but Islam's pre-eminence and social dominance was an accepted fact. This is borne out by the loud lamentations of the *brāhmana* chroniclers,[152] conversion of almost all

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[149] Abu'l Fazl, *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, (Jarrett) III, p. 355. It may, however, be mentioned that Abu'l Fazl wrongly refers to the Rishis as *brāhmanas*, and neither Jarrett nor J.N. Sarkar has corrected this mistake.

[150] *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (R&B), Vol. II pp. 149-50.

[151] *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, pp. 178-179.

[152] Jonarāja, p. 57; Śrivara, pp. 319-20.

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the traditional noble tribes,[153] establishment of a network of *khānaqāhs*, mosques and *madrasas*,[154] replacement of Sanskrit by Persian as official language,[155] and Islamization of the administrative institutions.[156] The only section that stuck to Hinduism was the majority of the *brāhmanas*. Even as late as the beginning of the sixteenth century there were, according to a contemporary source, more than eighty thousand *brāhmana* families in Kashmir.[157]

The conversion movement went on unabated, not only to seek new converts but to reorient the souls of the Muslim community and also to win them to different schools of thought, thanks to the Muslim preachers, some of whom came from the other Muslim lands, the majority being Kashmiris. Of the lately arrived Muslim preachers, Mīr Shamas al-Dīn ʻIrāqī, the disciple of Shāh Qāsim, the son and successor of Sayyid Muhammad Nūrbakhsh, was the most zealous missionary. He came to Kashmir twice, but his second visit in 1501-2 was primarily motivated to win conversions to Islam and to preach the Nūrbakhshiyya order which was greatly influenced by Shiʻism.[158] For this purpose he

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153 Besides the noble families of Chandan (Rainas) and Magrays who were converted to Islam towards the beginning of the fourteenth century, the other local noble families, namely, Damaras, Lavanyas, Thakurs, Nayaks, Dangars and Padars were Muslim in the fifteenth century. It is not known when they accepted Islam, but from the last quarter of the 15th century, when the role of nobles is being recorded in detail by our sources, we find them Muslim. See Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 99 sqq.

154 See infra, pp. 203-07.

155 It is not exactly known when Sanskrit was replaced by Persian as the official language, but it can be reasonably presumed that with the Islamization of the state during the reign of Sultān Sikandar, Sanskrit would have automatically given way to Persian. During the reign of Sultān Zain al-ʻĀbidīn (1420-1470), about which we have detailed information, Persian was very popular. Cf. Srivara, p. 136.

156 Islamization of the administration started vigorously from the reign of Sikandar onwards. For further details about the new institutions and offices established in Kashmir after the pattern of Muslim lands, particularly of Persia and Central Asia, see Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 195-215.

157 *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 53b.

158 Shams al-Dīn ʻIrāqī was born in the village of Kund near Solghan (*Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 3). His father, Ibrahim, was a Musavi Sayyid while his mother belonged to the Sayyid family of Qazvin (Ibid.). He was highly educated. This has been acknowledged even by our contemporary Sanskrit chronicler, Śuka (Śuka, *Rājatarangini*, Eng. tr. J. C. Dutt, p. 339). He was the disciple of Shāh Qasim, the son and successor of Sayyid Mohammad Nūrbakhsh (*Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 3; Śuka, p. 339). He is also the author of a treatise on Shiʻism titled *Fiqh-i-Ahwat* (*Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 13; *Tārīkh-i Rashidi* (E & D), p. 453.

Probably impressed by Mīr Shams al-Dīn's distinguished abilities, Hussain Mirza (1469-1506) of Herāt took him in his service and sent him as his envoy to the brought a band of his followers with him.[159] He succeeded in winning to his side the senior *khalifa* of the then prominent Kubrāvī saint of Kashmir, Shaikh Ismā'il Kubrāvī, and the two influential noble families, Chaks and Rainas, which considerably propped him up in his mission.[160] The *khānaqāh* at Zadibal (Srinagar) constructed in 1501[161] became the nerve centre of Shams al-Din 'Irāqī's mission.[162]

Mīr Shams al-Dīn 'Irāqī worked on many fronts simultaneously. He worked for promoting new conversions, reconverting the converts and recruiting adherents to his school of thought. Among many converts won by him, *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb* makes special mention of one Śrivar Bhatt of Shihāb al- Dīnpūr[163] who, like Suhabhatta, also proved a zealot. He pulled down many temples and offered his services to become *muhatasib* to implement the *Shar'iah.*[164] Also, from *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb* and *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* we learn that there were a number of people who for worldly motives had been feigning to be Muslims, but were not actually so.[165] Besides, there were others who frequently switched over to Islam or Hinduism according to social or material conveniences.[166] For a missionary like Shams al-Dīn 'Irāqī such a

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court of Hasan Shāh (1472-1484) of Kashmir. He arrived there in 1481 and stayed for about eight years (Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 21b-22a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 28b). Being an envoy, he could not carry on his missionary activities openly. In order to prepare the ground be, according to some contemporaries, became a disciple of the Kubrāvī Saint, Shaikh Ismā'il. But be was secretly active and influenced Bābā 'Ali Najjār, the *khalifa* of Shaikh Ismā'il, with Shi'i beliefs (Sayyid 'Ali, f. 24a, *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb* p. 4). On his return to Herāt, he was dismissed from service for reasons not known (Sayyid 'Ali f. 23b). This ultimately made Shams al-Dīn live with his preceptor, Shāh Qāsim, at Ray. He was, however, urged upon by Shāh Qāsim to preach the Nūrbakhshiyya order in Kashmir. And it was in response to this that he arrived there for the second time in 1501-1502 (*Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 8, 14-17, 24-25). For the fact that the Nūrbakhshiyya order was influenced by Shi'ism, see Nūrallāh Shushtari, *Majalis al-Mu'minin*, Tehran 1299/ 1882, pp. 315-17.

[159] Ibid., pp.3, 12 -13.

[160] According to a contemporary source, Bābā 'Ali Najjār, the *khalifa* of Shaikh Ismā'il Kubrāvī, handed over his disciples including Ghāzi Chak and many other nobles to Shams al-Dīn (Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 23a-24a). It seems that Shamas al-Din 'Irāqī bad already influenced Mūsa Raina, a powerful noble, during his first visit. That is why be extended his fullest support to him, and gave him financial help to carry on bis mission besides a piece of land at Jadibal (Srinagar) to build a *khānaqāh*, (*Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp.29- 37).

[161] Ibid., p. 64.

[162] For details about the *khānaqāh* and its activities, see *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, *passim*.

[163] Ibid., p. 194.

[164] Ibid., pp. 195-96.

[165] Ibid., pp. 210-20. Also see *Bahāristān-i-Shāhī*, ff. 43ab.

[166] Ibid.

situation was reproachful. According to him, any one who had once embraced Islam could not revert to his earlier faith. Thus, if be came across any instance of re-conversion he considered it apostasy[167] and, therefore, liable to be punished. However, instead of punishing them he persuaded them to re-embrace Islam. In this way he is said to have considerably promoted conversion.[168] And, in order to ensure irreversible conversion Mīr Shams al-Dīn 'Irāqī got the converts circumcised, made them eat cow's meat and arranged a teacher for each village and quarter for teaching the Qur'ān and Islamic fundamentals.[169]

At the same time Mīr Shams al-Dīn 'Irāqī was unhappy over the continuities of the shibboleths of pre-conversion times and the Muslim community's ignorance of the *Shari'ah.*[170] To his great dismay, he found the women folk still practising idolatry[171] and many converts without circumcision.[172] He called a meeting of the upper sections of Srinagar (*khawajah wa arbābi Shahr*) and urged them to learn and practise Islam.[173] He got many famous personalities of the time circumcised as they had not performed this *Sunna* at the time of their conversion.[174] Interestingly enough, he is perhaps the first missionary to lay emphasis on working among women folk for obtaining meaningful conversion.[175] Mīr Shams al-Dīn also built many mosques and appointed *imāms* in different villages.[176] It was also intolerable for a zealous Muslim preacher like Mīr 'Irāqī to see people openly indulging in drink and dance as was a normal feature of Hindu festivals.[177]

Mirzā Haidar Dughlat,[178] a Central Asian invader, who conquered the Valley and ruled it for about ten years (1541-1551), was also disquieted by the news of common people's ignorance of the fundamentals of Islam and their nominal conversion.[179] To win meaningful conversion to Islam, Mirza Haidar appointed a *qāzī* and a *muhtasib* in each *pargana* to see that the Muslims offered prayers, observed fast and lived like Muslims.[180] Besides, he also appointed a teacher (*mu'alim*) in each village for imparting religious education to Muslim children.[181] However, in spite of being zealous for obtaining real conversion to Islam Mirzā Haidar carries notoriety for being intolerant towards Shi'is.[182] Though his anti-Shi'i dispensation was, without any doubt, goaded by his desire to gain a political mileage out of it,[183] nevertheless, it sowed the seeds of dissension between the Sunnis and the Shi'is with sinister implications.

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[167] Ibid., pp. 211-222

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid., pp. 57, 191-92, 193, 200-223.

[170] Ibid., p. 200-202.

[171] Ibid., 213 sqq.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Ibid., pp 219-20.

[174] Ibid., pp 220-222.

[175] Ibid., 213 sqq.

[176] Ibid., *passim*

[177] Ibid., pp. 181-186

[178] For details about Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, see *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* (E&D), introduction. Also see Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 125-144.

With the introduction of Shi'ism, especially after Mirzā Haidar flared up sectarian passions, the Muslim religious leadership got split into two camps, each desperately trying to win converts to reinforce its numerical strength. Besides having a host of learned *'ulamā'* to buttress the faith among its followers, Shi'ism also got political patronage with the rise of Chaks to power in 1561[184] who ruled Kashmir till its annexation by the Mughals in 1586. Sunnism was fostered by the presence of a host of veteran saint-scholars, namely, Shaikh Fatah Allāh, Sayyid Ahmad Kirmānī, Bābā Mas'ud (Narwar Sahab), Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Bukhārī, Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm, Shaikh Ya'qūb Sarfī, and Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī.[185] Notwithstanding the primary pre-occupation of these late sixteenth century religious leaders with defending and reinforcing their respective sects, they played an effective role in disseminating Islamic knowledge and culture.

Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm (1494-1576), popularly known as *Sultān al-'Ārifīn* and *Mahbūb al-'Ālam*, ranks among the most celebrated saints of Kashmir.[186] He commanded mass following because he addressed

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[179] Bābā Nasib, *Nūr-nāma*, ff. 415a-417ab.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

[182] *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, pp. 432-33; Sayyid 'Ali, f. 26a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 54ab; Haider Malik, p. 57.

[183] For an interesting information about Mirza Haidar's politically motivated anti-Shi'i stance, see *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 52b-53a.

[184] See *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 58ab, 59a.

[185] For details about these saint scholars, see *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp.18-27, 116-24.

[186] Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm was born in 1494 at village Tujar in Baramulla district. He received his education from Shaikh Fatha Allāh Hāfiz, Maulana Darwish and Maulana Lutuf Allāh. Finally he became the disciple of Sayyid Jamāl al- Dīn Bukhārī, who initiated him into the Suhrawardī order. *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, (Urdu tr. under the title, *Hirzh al - Muhibīn* by Mohammad Tyub Siddiqi), Vol.1, pp. 44, 45,

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himself heart and soul to the cause of Islam besides being pious and spiritually elevated. He revitalized the Suhrawardī order in Kashmir, and as a true Suhrawardī worked as an active missionary and a crusader of puritan Islam. His missionary activity revolved mainly round his attempt to reorient the souls of the Muslims by inspiring them to follow Islam both in letter and spirit. To achieve this end he took many steps besides giving homilies to the masses who thronged to him daily. Having considered the significance of the mosque as an important institution for Islamizing the Muslim society, the Shaikh launched a movement of building a mosque in each village.[187] And to create popular enthusiasm in this regard he himself set out for constructing mosques and built many at different villages.[188] It is, therefore, not surprising to see building of mosques becoming one of the main activities of the Suhrawardīs[189] who wielded great influence in Kashmir for about two centuries after Shaikh Hamzah.[190] Secondly, like other great preachers of Islam, the Shaikh assigned the work of preaching and teaching of Islam to his learned *khulafā* who in accordance with his wishes settled at different places of the Valley to fulfill the work assigned to them by their *murshid*.[191]

It is also important to mention that Shaikh Hamzah did not compromise on anything that did not accord with the *Sharī'ah*. He rejected instrumental music, as he regarded it forbidden by the *Sharī'ah*.[192] To purge un-Islamic mores from the belief system of the Muslims, he built mosques near many springs and cut down trees considered sacred

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63; *Chilchilat al- 'Ārifīn*, ff 83a, 65b, 74b, 89b. Shaikh Hamzah was a strong supporter of Sunnism and is said to have converted many Shi'is to the Sunni faith (*Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, pp. 151, 218). He is said to have been banished from Srinagar by the then ruler Ghāzī Shāh Chak (*Chilchilat al- 'Ārifīn*, ff 77b-78b; *Hidāyat al-Mukhlisīn*, ff 127ab; *Asrār al Abrār*, f 138b). He passed away in May 1576 and is buried on the slope of Kōh-i-Mārān in Srinagar.

[187] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. II, pp. 76-80.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid., p. 80. Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī quotes the sayings of the Prophet with a view to create enthusiasm among the *murīds* and general populace in favour of constructing mosques (ibid). It was under the influence of the Suhrawardīs' emphasis on constructing mosques that we find Bābā Nasīb al-Dīn Ghāzī, the illustrious *murīd* of Bābā Dā'ūd, pursuing vigorously the mission of laying down the foundations of mosques in different villages of the Valley. Muhammad A'zam Didamari, *Wāqi'at-i Kashmir*, p. 296.

[190] Ibid., pp. 236-50.

[191] Thus, for example, Mīr Sayyid Haidar settled at Tulmul, Hasan Qārī and Ishāq Qārī at Hardushiv, Shaikh Ahmad at Chāgal and 'Alī Raina at Tujar.

[192] Once on his way to offer prayers, Shaikh Hamzah incidentally heard instrumental music. Upon this, he performed his ablutions afresh because he had heard 'a forbidden practice'. *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 7.

by the folk.[193] The Shaikh also persuaded his disciples to do manual labour and live on their own earnings.[194] Shaikh Hamzah's work was carried on by his most prominent disciples, namely, Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, Khawāja Hasan Qārī, Shaikh Ahmad Chāglī, Bābā Haidar Tulmulī, Khawāja Ishāq Qārī, Bābā 'Ali Raina, Khawāja Mīram Bazāz, Bābā Hardī Rishi, and a host of others.

An equally important contribution of Shaikh Hamzah and his disciples was the enrolment of the Rishis in the Suhrawardī order,[195] which had a profound bearing on the subsequent history of Islam. While on the one hand it bridged the gulf between the Rishis and the '*ulamā'*, and finally assimilated the Rishis into Islamic mysticism, it, on the other, influenced the Suhrawardī order, which for obvious reasons sought to focus on seeking identity between Rishi and Sūfī traditions. Needless to emphasize, the Rishis' extreme asceticism had caused a serious wedge between the Rishis and the '*ulamā'*.[196] This crisis was resolved by Shaikh Hamzah when he succeeded in enrolling some leading Rishis in the Suhrawardī order; and persuaded them to shun extremities like retiring to jungles, abstaining from meat eating and subsisting on wild herbs.[197] Although initially the enrolled Rishis took meat just once in their lives,[198] a dramatic change is, however, observed in different spheres of their erstwhile life style. We now find them leading an active life. For instance, Hardī Rishi, who entered into the discipleship of Shaikh Hamzah and was considered *Sultān al- Auliya'* (king of saints) during his period,[199] not only earned his own livelihood by actively pursuing agriculture,[200] but he also exhorted his disciples to take up the profession for an honest living.[201] This shift in the practices of the Rishis proved a major breakthrough in setting in motion the process of drawing them in the orbit of legal and social framework of Islam.

However, since the primary preoccupation of Shaikh Hamzah was to enroll the Rishis for their ultimate absorption in the Suhrawardī order.

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193 Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 76-78.

194 *Chilchilat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 20a, 21a.

195 Of the most prominent Rishis who entered into the discipleship of Shaikh Hamzah were, Shankar Rishi, Rūpī Rishi and Hardī Rishi. Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Rishi- nāma*, ff. 178, 192, 219a.

196 See Bābā-Nasīb, *Rishi- nāma*, ff. 184ab, 185a.

197 *Tadhkirat al- 'Ārifīn*, op. cit., ff. 264ab.

198 Ibid.

199 Haidar Tulmuli, *Hidāyat al- Mukhlisīn*, f. 77b.

200 Khākī, *Rishi- nāma*, f. 58a. See also *Mishkātī*, op. cit., f. 101a.

201 Bābā Nasīb, op. cit., f. 301a; *Mishkātī*, f. 84a.

he did not put forth conditions that would have stuck in their gizzards. Instead, all efforts were made to seek affinity between Islam and those Rishi practices, which fitted in the broader framework of the Sūfī belief system – control of *nafs* (*zabt'i nafs*). In this regard the advocacy of Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, the saint-scholar and illustrious *khalifa* of Shaikh Hamzah, of vegetarianism and rejection of family life by the Rishis is worthy of note.[202] Although Khākī's overemphasis on showing Islamic identity of Rishi practices was dictated by the pressures of the peculiar circumstances of Kashmir, nevertheless it influenced the Suhrawardī order[203] and thereby Islam in Kashmir.

Of the most reputed saints of the Suhrawardī-Rishi syncretic phase to have done a good deal of work for seeking practical conversions during the late sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century was Bābā Nasīb al-Dīn Ghāzī, the distinguished disciple of Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī. While living an extremely austere life,[204] he worked as an active missionary. He toured different parts of the Valley with the main purpose of creating the *Shari'ah* consciousness among the people, who, in spite of being Muslims, still carried out un-Islamic practices.[205] He is also famous for having laid foundations for mosques in several villages, repaired many dilapidated ones[206] and dedicating himself to the cause of the poor for which he earned the title, *Abu'l Fuqara* (father of the poor).[207] In his work for creating an Islamic ambience in the true sense Bābā Nasīb was supported by his devoted followers, numbering three to four hundred.[208]

While the Muslim preachers were busy in the process of conversion, seeking recruits for their respective schools of thought and imparting knowledge of the *Shari'ah*, the cultural dominance of Islam, which increased with each passing day, gave a tremendous impetus to facilitating the process of Islamic acculturation and voluntary conversions. No wonder that a Sanskrit chronicler of late fifteenth century Kashmir laments over *brāhmana* boys' fascination for Islam and contempt for Brāhmanism:

> Sons are now fond of the Mausulas (Muslims), and are ashamed to follow the Shastra which was followed by their fathers and grandfathers. Men of four castes had graced the kingdom in former days,

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[202] Khākī, *Qasida'i Lāmiyya* (published by Idarah-i-Sultānī, Srinagar under the title *Hardi Rishi*) pp. 54sqq.

[203] For details see Ishaq Khan, op. cit., pp. 151-160.

[204] *Wāqi'at-i Kashmir*, ff. 99ab. See also Ishaq Khan, pp. 155-159.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Ibid.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid., see also *Tadhkira-i-Auliya-i Kashmir*, op. cit., p. 176.

> but latterly the people had gradually adopted blamable practices, and the ceremonies prescribed for special days in the Purāṇas came to be forgotten year by year. Why should not the people whose custom is bad suffer calamities?[209]

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[209] Śrivara, pp. 319-320.

3: Identifying the Roots of Conversion–I

While the details of the causes of conversion have been left to the following Section, here we will attempt to answer a few related and no less crucial questions: Can the complex question of conversion to Islam in Kashmir be answered by following a mono-causal approach? What was the religious milieu of Kashmir at the time it encountered Islam? Was religion a static bundle of attitudes, beliefs and practices which could not be reformulated, changed or challenged? Or was it porous and fluid bounded by no fixed conceptual frontiers? Was the society ideologically homogeneous or heterogeneous? To what mental realm did the common people belong? What was the nature of the pre-Sultanate polity? Was it posited to bring religious changes with the change of rulers? And how far is the 'force theory' a plausible explanation for conversion to Islam in Kashmir?

Need for Contextual Multi-factor Analysis:

In view of the variegated genetic make up of the humans, the cultural variability between different groups of the society, the complexity of social life and the specified situations in which conversions took place in Kashmir, no single category of 'causes' can help explain the involved question: How Kashmir became a mass Muslim society. It seems, therefore, in the fitness of things that instead of chasing after a mono-causal approach we may, in search for more satisfactory answer, do better if we adopt contextual multi-factor analysis and ask the question: What kind of factor-mix, in specified situations, resulted in this development? After all, in many cases conversions were won by the interplay of religious, social, economic, political and psychological factors; in many others a particular factor or a set of factors weighed more against the other; and what factor or set of factors weighed with one group it did not necessarily, and quite often did not, operate in the case of the other group. Let us see how.

Any attempt at explaining a religious change or for that matter any attitudinal or social change *inter alia* presupposes disputing with the questionable assumption of psychic unity of humankind. It is now more than clear, thanks to the recent findings of the scientists, that genes influence personality: there are individual genes that affect particular traits and the genetic make-up of the individuals is not uniform. A recent study has identified a gene that unravels why some people are impulsive, excitable, quick-tempered and extravagant; and why some people tend to be reflective, rigid, loyal, stoic, slow to anger and frugal.[1]

Although the scientists have now firmly established the relationship between genetic make up and behaviour of humans, it has been an age-old belief of the collective consciousness of the Kashmiri society that human behaviour is largely governed by innate pre-dispositions. The paramount role of genetic make up in determining the behaviour of the individuals figures prominently in the body literature of Kashmiri folklore which contains much thought out and empirically drawn lessons, put forth by the collective mentality after sustained experiences over the centuries. There are many terms, idioms and proverbs underlining the importance of genetic make up in human behaviour. The terms like *a'dran, khambīr, fitrat* and *mizāj* , are frequently used to denote variations in the genetic make up and the consequential differentiation in the behaviour pattern of different individuals. If one tries to know why different people respond differently to a given stimulus or why there is a variability in the attitudes and behaviour patterns of different people, pat comes the reply, "It is because different people are of different *a'dran* (literally, a compound of different materials), *khambīr* (Persian *khamīr* meaning dough), *fitrat* (nature), *mizāj* (temperament)". There are also many proverbs showing not only the awareness of people about the individual genes that affect particular traits but also the masterly role of them in determining human behaviour. For example, *kānih achh wuzih kyah nindarih?* (What will rouse the blind eye from sleep?).[2] When the Sūfī saints say that none can lead a Sūfī path unless he is divinely chosen for it (which they call *hidāyat*),[3] they, too, by implication, mean that the genetic make up of an individual has to be necessarily compatible with the demands of the mystic path.

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[1] These findings have been published in the journal, *Nature Genetics*, New York, in its January 1996 issue. However I have borrowed this information from *The Times of India*, New Delhi, which briefly reported these findings in its January 6, 1996 issue in its front page article, *Gene Influencing Personality Identified*.

[2] Another often quoted saying in this context is: *hūni lut thowizan kandilas andar, tatih nerih hūni luti* (If a dog's tail be set in a *kandū*, even then it will remain a dog's tail)

[3] *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, Vol. I, pp. 1-2.

However, the collective experience of the collective mentality of Kashmiri society does not believe that each individual is intrinsically unique in his master gene; nor that the master gene necessarily transfers from parents to children.[4] On the other hand, it affirms that mankind is fragmented into different psychological groups and the members of a psychological group have some uniformity in their dominant natural traits; and the domineering innate pre-dispositions of one group are at variance with the other.[4a] That is why different groups of people behave differently though born and brought up in the same circumstances and confronted by the same situations. Hence what *modus operandi* yields dividends in the case of one group, it fails with regard to the other. The contrasting response of the *brāhmana* caste to conversion movement testifies this fact beyond doubt. Some of them were won to Islam by the life and teachings of the Sūfis;[5] some were lured by the material benefits of embracing Islam;[6] in some cases, not parents but children were influenced by Islam;[7] but there were some to whom nothing could influence; and all efforts to persuade them to change failed.

Having a profound understanding of human nature[8] and its heterogeneity, the Sūfi saints were fully conscious that mankind is divided into varied human types and the real self of each type is occupied by an entirely different system of hot and vital feelings, ideas and beliefs; and what is hot and live in one group is dead and cool in other[9]. Therefore, they launched a movement with an unparalleled variety and richness of emphasis to meet general demands of human nature and to satisfy aspirations which distinctly occupied the central parts of consciousness of different groups. Admittedly, the success of the preachers resulted from their capacity to view things from the vantage point of total perspective. While we leave the details to the following Section, what we want to emphasise here is that besides general attractions there were distinct elements in the conversion; and their relations to different human types deserve to be discriminated.

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[4] Doubtless there is a maxim '*Yuth chēva tuth pēva*' (As are the parents so are the children), but there is another proverb pointing to the presence of a contrary fact also. The aphorism runs as; *kandrin manz gulāb; gulāban manz kand* (Roses among thorns, thorns among roses).

[4a] There is an often quoted saying : *Halēn banan wuhari thān; hihēn hihi samakhan* (Dented covers for dented saucepans, and like men for like men).

[5] *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, p. 194.

[6] Jonarāja, p.60.

[7] Śrivara, pp. 319—20.

[8] One of the striking abilities of the Sūfi masters, which their works bear out, was their profound understanding of human nature. See, for example, *Dhakhīrat al- Mulūk* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamadānī.

[9] Ibid., pp. 280-281.

It is significant to note that the lead in embracing Islam was taken by a particular human type to whom religion had no meaning in the abstract or in the community, but something that essentially related to their individual lives; or who had the feeling of un-wholeness, of moral imperfection and who had the dynamic tendency towards fulfilment, completeness and integrity of their personality. In the sources of pre-Islamic Kashmir we come across sections of people whom the *brāhmana* writers call atheists,[10] irreligious people,[11] *Cārvākas*, *Turushkas*[12] and the like, obviously because they openly defied the established religious and social order as it failed to satisfy them and were in search of satisfying their levels of awareness and whole rational and cognitive system.[13] Besides the emergence of heterodox movements, we also find the emergence of a large number of cults, sub-cults and the frequent change of faiths even by the 'teachers,'[14] pointing to a deep feeling of un-wholeness among sections of people. It may be perhaps reasonable to infer that the first group of converts to Islam comprised this thoughtful section belonging to different cross sections of the society.

Having said that there were divergent groups of people, with their own distinctive mental structures, which responded differently to their total environment, we cannot, however, underestimate the powerful role of social forces in influencing the behaviour of the individuals albeit in varying degrees. Sometimes the circumstances result into change of place in systems of ideas, from more central to more peripheral and from more peripheral to more central parts of consciousness. It is, therefore, understandable that the Sūfī saints firmly believed that even for those, who are naturally disposed towards following a righteous path, compatible circumstances and association (which they called *suhbat*), for treading the path and achieving the goal are equally

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[10] Ksemendra, *Nītikalpataru*, 130.1-11; Jonarāja, p.14.

[11] Jonarāja, p.27.

[12] *Rājatarangiṇī*, iv. 345; vii.1095.

[13] For details see, *infra*, pp. 90-96, 151-54, 211-16.

[14] Ksemendra, *Narmamālā*, p.22.

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important.[15] It has also been substantiated by the recent studies of some sociologists who believe that the self is not either individual or social primarily or firstly, but rather is a creation of dialectics between the individual and his social environment.[16]

The society of Kashmir with which Islam came face to face was characterised by structured social relationship where the systems, institutions and ideologies did not function uniformly for the society and for all its members. The good of one was bad for another. The rank injustice that followed from the contemporary institutions leading to the alienation of some sensitive souls, besides the masses, from the system is best captured in the following *Vaakh* of Lalla – the 14th century famous Śaivite saint of Kashmir:

> *Gatulah akh Vuchum bŏcha säty marān,*
> *Pan zan harān pōhani vāva lāh,*
> *Něshibodh akh vuchum vāzas mārān,*
> *Tana Lalla bōh prārān tsěněm-na prāh.*
>
> I saw a wise man dying of starvation,
> Emaciated, he seemed to wither and fall like autumn leaves;
> I saw an utter fool beating his cook (who could not make a toothsome dish)
> Since then have I, Lalla, been waiting for the bonds to break off.[17]

In this situation the priorities before different sections were entirely different from one another. The dominant minority wanted to perpetuate its dominance; the masses craving to get freedom from their merciless masters; the former interested to maintain the status quo and the latter aspiring to break off the bonds. The antagonistic climate created by this situation is tersely summed up in some aphorisms: *akis dazan dher te baiqh wushnavan athe* (A man's beard is burning and another is warming his hands upon it) or *haur nai pilas, zangai z'las* (If I do not reach to his upper parts, still then I will attack his legs).

Besides creating a social scene where wise men died of hunger and fools were enjoying a luxurious life leading to social antagonism, the prevailing structures also created group mentalities. The dominant landed tribes, who formed the ruling class, were indoctrinated by their specific environment to rule and live off the fat of the land. They did not belong to any upper caste; they were contemptuously called *dasyus*

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[15] Cf. *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, vol. II, pp. 1-2.

[16] For details, see C.H. Cooley, *Human Nature and Social Order* (New York, 1968).

[17] B.N.Parimoo, *The Ascent of Self*, p. 9.

(robbers) by the *brāhmanas*.[18] Religion was secondary in their lives. Their profanity was further fuelled by the caste rules that made religious education the monopoly of the *brāhmanas* only. Having been nurtured in a specific environment where maintaining one's position as a ruling elite was the dominant purpose of life, their free thinking in the matters of belief system made them a soft group for conversion. No wonder, then, that we find the sections of ruling class eating 'cow's meat', in the company of Muslims,[19] desecrating temples[20] and entering into matrimonial relations with the Muslims long before the establishment of the Sultanate[21].

The *brāhmanas*, the second important social section, were not a homogeneous group, as we will see in the following Section. While some of them embraced Islam, the dominant majority was, however, all for not 'polluting their caste'. The emotional attachment with their own belief system transmitted to them by various kinds of educational procedure and domestic ethos made them resistant to change.

The official bureaucracy, known as *kāyasthas*, has been portrayed by Ksemendra and Kalhana thoroughly mundane, irreligious, corrupt, atrocious, fraudulent, egoistic, false, merciless, ruthless and artificial in their inner and outer life.[22] Both Ksemendra and Kalhana emphatically talk of the *kāyasthas'* antipathy against the *brāhmanas* and the Brāhmanical institutions.[23] Ksemendra presents *kāyastha* as " the incarnation of the bursar of the demons who cried in heaven when his masters were killed by Lord Viśnu; and Kali took pity on him and asked him to take birth on the earth providing him with a pen to work with against the gods, *brāhmanas* and such other things as helped the gods to flourish".[24] He "tried to cover his ruthless acts by pretending to be a real devotee of Lord Śiva in whose temple he used to go with his associates and make gestures like shedding tears and reciting devotional verses. While putting on such a drama he, in reality, was chiefly concerned to gather information about the number of the *brāhmanas* who went on hunger strike against his policy of reduction or resumption of land grants to *brāhmanas* and the temples."[25] Kalhana makes it clear that the *kāyasthas* did not possess any religious knowledge.[26] Given the enormous sources of perquisites which an official position provided, the *kāyasthas* had developed so much vested interest in monopolising the state services that according to Kalhana when Uccala (A.D 1101-11) dismissed many of them, "some in order to get employment made even their mother, sister, daughter and wife offer their persons to men of noble rank."[27]

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[18] *Rājataranginī*, viii.2734.

[19] Ibid., vii.1232

[20] Infra, pp. 151-54.

[21] Jonarāja, pp. 26-27.

[22] Ksemendra, *Narmamālā*, pp. 4-24; *Kalāvilāsa*, pp. 59-60; *Samayamātrkā*, p. 41; *Avadānakalpalatā*, p.387; *Daśāvatāracarita*, p.160; *Rājataranginī*, iv. 621, 629; vii.1226; viii. 85-114.

[23] *Narmamālā*, pp. 4-5; *Rājataranginī*, iv. 620sqq; v. 180, 439; vii. 149, 1226; viii. 53, 85sqq, 560sqq.

[24] *Narmamālā*, pp. 4 – 5.

Ksemendra also exposes the rank materialism of other sections of people, namely, goldsmiths, physicians, singers, astrologers, merchants, mendicants, priests, gamblers, misers, prostitutes, etc; who for achieving the material goals had thrown all morals to the winds.[28] A person whose be all and end all in life was to attain worldly attractions, it was easier for the changing tide to win him over no matter whether he was a priest or a prostitute.

There was a small but influential section of traders who figure among the prominent converts to Islam.[29] The reasons for this are not difficult to seek if we consider that they had frequent interaction with the Muslims in the neighbouring Muslim-ruled lands.[30] In some cases this interaction would have accounted for a gradual emulation of Islamic culture and in some a rapid regenerative change by coming into contact with the Muslim saints. Having long association with the Muslims, they seem to have been among those few Kashmiris who did not face any problem of language barrier to interact with the Muslim preachers both inside and outside Kashmir. And what is more, with the rule of Muslims both in Kashmir and the neighbouring territories, the acceptance of Islam offered rewards rather than punishments. It is therefore, quite understandable to see a *brāhmana* chronicler specially mentioning the merchants for abandoning the *Vedas* and killing the cows.[31]

The 'feudal' system, *Varnāśramadharma*, *kula* system (tribalism) and patriarchal-joint family system were some crucial structures of Kashmiri society facilitating group conversion. While the details in this regard have been left to the following Section, what we, however, want to emphasise here is that what factor or factors accounted for the conversion of what may be called the controllers of society at various levels, did not hold good for the controlled population who simply followed in the foot steps of their respective masters/ leaders.

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[25] Ibid.

[26] *Rājatarangini*, viii. 100.

[27] Ibid., 102.

[28] See his *Deśopadeśa*, *Narmamālā* and *Kalāvalāsa*. Also, see N.S. Shukla, *Cultural Trends in Kashmir and* Ksemendra, pp. 140-164.

[29] Śrivara, pp. 234-235, 319.

[30] *Rājatarangini*, vii. 495.

[31] Śrivara, pp. 234-335, 319.

The paramount role of ruling class, tribal heads and priests and *gurus* as role models for a culture change was clearly understood by the Muslim missionaries. It is, therefore, not fortuitous to see them giving top priority to converting what may be called in sociological language *reference group* of the society. Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn, the first known missionary gave precedence to winning over the ruler of the time and his courtiers.[32] Sayyid 'Alī Hamdānī, Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī, Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī and others followed the same policy of winning over the rulers and nobles as a pre- requisite for securing mass conversion[33]. Interestingly enough, the first four disciples of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn Rishi also belonged to the upper strata of the society.[34] These upper classes – whether rulers, nobles or others – set a trend for others to change; but the motivations behind the conversion of the trend-setters and trend followers were not always the same.

It is also worth noting to see the Sūfī saints (except the Rishis) initiating the movement of Islamization from the capital city, *Shahr-i Kashmir* (Srinagar), and making it a strong-hold of their mission. It was only after achieving a substantial progress in *Shahr* that they turned their attention to the rural areas. That there was a colony of Muslims in Srinagar before the establishment of the Sultanate[35] and that all the prominent Sūfī missionaries focused their attention first on winning the people of *Shahr* and establishing a large number of *khānaqāhs*, *madrasas*, mosques, *fatawā* and legal institutions in the city are the phenomena that are well known to the historians of medieval Kashmir. The reason to begin the movement from *Shahr* was obvious. Because of the very nature of the composition and exposure level of the city population, the urban people were considered comparatively flexible to culture change than the people living in the rural areas. However, the most important reason was the awareness of the missionaries about the role of the cities as catalysts of culture change. They were conscious of the fact that the villagers generally imitate the culture of the cities; and so it was regarded fruitful to give precedence to the city over the villages.[36]

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[32] Supra, p.53

[33] Ibid., pp. 58,62,69

[34] Bābā Bam al-Dīn was a reputed *brāhmana* ascetic famous by the name of Bhuma Sādh before he was converted to Islam by Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn; Bābā Zain al-Dīn (Zia Singh of pre-conversion days) was the son of a ruling family of Kishtwār and Latif al-Dīn (Ladi Raina) was the chief of Maru-Ādvin. For further details, see *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp. 159-169.

[35] Supra, p.49

The argument that there is no point in searching for a single theory to explain the conversions to Islam carries further weight if we bear in mind that mass conversion to Islam was not a sudden development; instead it was a long drawn out process spreading over at least three hundred years during which momentous political, religious and cultural developments took place, marking off its different phases from one another. For example, the first known conversion took place when the Muslim Sultanate was not yet founded. The first convert, needless to repeat, was the ruler of the time followed by his Prime Minister and many others. The ruler was influenced by the Sūfī saint, Bulbul Shāh; the causes of the conversion of others are not known. While some of them might have followed in the foot steps of the ruler to earn his patronage, to the sections of common people, however, the faith of the ruler was the faith of God. Leaving the details to the following pages, it is pertinent to mention here that the tradition of following the faith of the rulers had a long and continuous history in Kashmir. At the same time Rinchana was the leader of a strong group, mostly Ladakhi *Bhuttas*, with whose support he had captured the throne.[37] Given the strong tradition of group loyalty of the time and the inability of Rinchana to rule without the support of this core group, it is reasonable to suggest that Rinchana's conversion might have been followed by the conversion of his Ladakhi supporters as was done by his Kashmiri Prime Minister.

The second recorded evidence of conversion pertains to the reign of Shihāb al-Dīn (1354-1373). The conversion was promoted by the arrival of Sūfī saints viz; Sayyid Hussain Simnānī and Sayyid Taj al-Dīn. Sayyid Hussain Simnānī avoided the company of kings and courts. That is why he opted to settle down in a village far away from the capital city. Sayyid Taj al-Dīn, however, preferred the capital city for his missionary activity. But the Sultān continued to be a neutral ruler. A majority of his nobles were non-Muslim;[38] his two known queens were also non-Muslim [39] and he is on record to have expressed his greatest regards for the religious institutions of other faiths.[40] The landmark event in the history of the spread of Islam in Kashmir is the arrival of Sayyid 'Alī Hamdānī with his seven hundred disciples. The ruler of the time, Qutub al-Dīn, no doubt became his *murīd-i khās*; but given the dominant majority of the non-Muslims in the Valley, the Sultān could not extend any political help to him apart from changing his personal life and providing *madad-i-ma'ash* grants to the saints and their institutions.[41] Thus whatever success was achieved by the Sayyid, it was solely the result of his imposing saintly personality and preachings and teachings. Another significant phase in the history of conversion is the reign of Sultān Sikandar (1398-1413) when according to the contemporary Sanskrit chronicler, Jonarāja, " the *mlecchas* entered Kashmir even as locusts enter a good field of corn".[42] The Sultān extended political patronage to the missionaries and imposed a ban on many un-Islamic practices. The neo-converts became proverbial zealots and pulled down many temples.[43] This new situation accounted for some forced migrations from Kashmir.[44] However, the conditions changed with the accession of Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn, the son of Sultān Sikandar. His long reign of fifty years (1420-1470) is remarkable for exemplary religious freedom enjoyed by the people. Besides patronising all religions on an equal footing, he allowed all those who had accepted Islam under any duress to revert to their old faith.[45] Interestingly, however, alongside the 'revival of Hinduism', we find peaceful conversion won by the Sūfī saints, especially by the newly founded indigenous Sūfī movement called the Rishi Movement.[46]

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[36] See *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, pp. 263-64 Sayyid ʿAli Hamdānī impressing upon the *ʿulamā* and *Sūfīs*, who were concentrated in cities, to work for Islam in villages too.

[37] Jonarāja, p. 18.

By the end of the fifteenth century the writ of Islam ran large in Kashmir owing to large scale conversions and influx of Sūfīs, *'ulamā'*, litterateurs, poets, technologists, scientists, craftsmen and artists from the advanced Muslim lands, particularly from Persia and Central Asia.

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[38] The non-Muslims constituted dominant majority even during the reign of the son and successor of Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn. See Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5b.

[39] Jonarāja, pp. 42-44.

[40] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[41] See Infra, p.112

[42] Jonarāja, p.58.

[43] Ibid., pp.59-60.

[44] Ibid., p.66

[45] For details, see N.K. Zutshi, *Sultan Zain ul-Abidin of Kashmir.*

[46] Supra, pp.65-66

With this occurred a cultural revolution in Kashmir. Islam became a normative culture and all those who wanted to improve their position or who wanted a membership of high culture, embraced the new religion – the religion of the *reference group*.[47] In short, what we want to emphasise is that the conversion to Islam was won over a long period of at least three hundred years; and these three centuries were marked by a wide variety of milieus. Therefore, while searching for an answer to the question of mass conversion we have to keep into account the heterogeneous environments in which it was brought about.

Religious Milieu

For any serious attempt at explaining the conversion, it is of crucial importance to know the religious milieu of Kashmir at the time it came face to face with Islam. True, the religious history of the pre-Islamic Kashmir still awaits a scholarly treatment, it is, however, easy to obtain a broad picture of the religious developments and trends even from a casual study of the sources. The main features of the religious life were: presence of myriad cults, contest between tradition and dissent, religion in a process of transition and reformulation, infiltration of Tantricism in all cults, moral depravity among the priests and *gurus*, co-operative relations between the rulers and *brāhmanas*, super-imposition of *brāhmanas*, religion-centred kingship in *rājā*-centred polity, mass innocence and a popular demand for the supernatural, miraculous and fantastic. Each of these variables helped the conversion movement in its own specific way.

Apparently there were only two faiths ruling the world view of Kashmiris at the time Islam penetrated in the Valley. These were Hinduism and Buddhism – the former dominant and the latter enfeebled. However, Hinduism was in reality a conglomeration of many sects with stark divergencies and differences in their respective beliefs and practices. Let us cite the example of Śaivism, which became the dominant cult of Kashmir from the tenth century.[48] There were many Śaiva sects with hardly anything in common save that all of them regarded Śiva as the Cosmic overlord. Broadly speaking there were three types of Śaivites who may be classified as semi-Vedic, non-Vedic and anti-Vedic. The semi-Vedic Śaivites were those Śaivites who followed the Vedic and *Smarta Puranic* norms plus many aspects of Śaivism namely, the Mother Goddess cult, lingum worship, carnivorous diet etc. However, as adherents of *Vedas* and *Smarta Puranic* norms, they were the believers of *Varnāśramadharma*, authority of the *brāhmanas*, idol worship, theism and pantheism, rituals and ceremonies.[49] Among the semi-Vedic Śaivites may also be counted, what may be called the renouncers who according to Marco Polo " live in communities, observe strict abstinence in regard to eating, drinking and the intercourse of the sexes and refrain from every kind of sexual indulgence in order that they may not give any offence to the idols whom they worship."[50] The non-Vedic Śaivites were the Tantric Śaivites who relied more on *Tantras* than on the *Vedas*. The Tantric Śaivism of Kashmir also known as Kashmiri Śaivism is essentially an absolute monistic philosophy based on sixty-four *Śaiva Āgamas*.[51] This absolute non-dualistic philosophy posits that there is only one absolute reality called *Paramaśiva*.[52] It belittles the worth and value of pilgrimage, worship of the gods and the like of *vrata, tapa, tīrtha, devācārnādishu*.[53] It also emphasises that God should be meditated upon as one without hands, feet, belly or limbs and only as *Satcidānanda* and *Prakāsha*.[54] To 'men of little intelligence God seems to dwell in icons or symbolic diagrams (*pratimāsu alpabuddhīnam*)'.[55] Telling of beads or recitation of the names of God and singing of hymns of praise 'are worship of a low kind while offering of oblations into sacrificial fire (*hōma*) and *pūja* are even lower than the low kind of worship (*japastutih syādadhamā homapūjādhamādhamā*)'.[56] In the same vein it does not see any worth and value in austere penance. More emphasis is laid on yoga rather than on ritual.[57] Also, there is no room for discrimination on the basis of caste and sex so far as initiation in Śaivism is concerned.[58]

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[47] Śuka, pp. 319-320.

[48] During the Karkotas and early Utpalas Vaiśnavism received preferential royal patronage. See *Rājataranginī*, Books iv and v. But it seems that Śaivism was too strong to be ignored even by the Vaiśnava rulers. At the time Utpalas rose to power Śaivism seems to have re-emerged as a powerful sect as, according to Kalhana, Avantivarman, though a Vaiśnava, "disclosed to Sura at the end of his life and with folded hands his attachment to the worship of Viśnu, which he had long hidden." *Rājataranginī*, v. 124.

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[49] For these practices of the Vedic Śaivites, see *Nīlmatāpurana*; *Rājatarangnī*, *passim* and *Lalla Vaakh*. See also infra, pp. 150-153.

[50] *The Travels of Marco-Polo*, op. cit., p. 64.

[51] B.N. Pandit, *Aspects of Kashmiri Śaivism*, p.188.

[52] For details about Kashmiri Śaivism, see Ibid., also B.N. Pandit, *Specific Principles of Kashmiri Śaivism*; J.C. Chatterji, *Kashmir Shaivaism*.

[53] *Kulārnava Tantra*: Ulasa ix; quoted by Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*, p. 16.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] B. N. Pandit, *Aspects of Kashmiri Śaivism*, op. cit., p.189.

The Tantric Śaivites were also divided into different sects on the basis of the different *ācāras* followed by different groups. The main *ācāras* were *Daksina ācāra, Samaya ācāra, Vama ācāra, Koula ācāra, Mata ācāra* and *Trika ācāra.*[59] The last one of these was predominantly popular among the Śaivas of Kashmir.[60] The use of five *makārās* (wine, meat, fish, roasted corn and sex) was essentially prescribed in *Koulācāra*[61] – the *ācāra* whose popularity in Kashmir was only next to *Trika ācāra*[62]. *Trika ācāra*, however agrees with the *Koula* view that the limitless divine self-bliss can be experienced through sensual enjoyments. The use of *makrās* has been recommended in couplets 69-74 of the *Vijnānabhairavo*, an important scriptural work on the *Trika* system.[63] Abhinavgupta, the famous exponent of Kashmiri Śaivism, maintains that an aspirant can have access to the limitless divine bliss called *jagadānanda* through an experience of sensual enjoyments.[64] *Vamācāra* prescribed an excessive use of intoxicants without any element of modesty in its practice.[65] While *Kaulas* used *makārās* in closed compartments called *Kulacakras*, *Vamācārins* took it publically.[66] *Daksinācāra* prohibits the use of such objects.[67] The *Mata ācāra* has a position in between the *Kaula* and *Trika ācāra.*[68]

Both Kşemendra and Kalhana unanimously talk of extreme depravity that had pervaded the Śaiva *gurus*. In *Deśopadesā* and *Narmamālā,* Kşemendra delineates the voluptuousness of Śaiva teachers. They carried on illicit relations even with the wives of their

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., pp. 201, 206, 207.

[60] It may, however, be mentioned that it is not correct to identify the whole of Kashmiri Śaivism with *Triko Śastra*. It is only one among many practical paths recognised by Kashmiri Śaivism. The other paths equally recognized are *Kaula*, *Mata*, *Vama*, etc. Cf. *Aspects of Kashmiri Saivism*, p. 201.

[61] Ibid., p. 206.

[62] See *Śaivāgamas*, pp. 176-77. The followers of *Kaulācāra* came to be called *Kaulas*. It may be mentioned that the surname (*krām*) *Kaul* still survives with a sizable majority of Kashmiri Pandits.

[63] Vide , B.N Pandit, *Specific principles of Kashmiri Śaivism*, p.119.

[64] *Aspects of Kashmiri Śaivism*, p. 155.

[65] Ibid., p.207.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

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pupils.[69] They nurtured lasciviousness, ire, jealousy, covetousness, capriciousness – in fact all evil deeds.[70] They had a liaison with prostitutes and enjoyed drinks in their company. Satirizing the lasciviousness of the Śaiva *gurus*, Kṣemendra says:

> *Kim dharmyatra no randā dhik sukhām randayā vinā*
> *Randāhīnostu mā mokṣah praudhoir ityuditām vitaih.*[71]

The *gurus* had become "guides to all rogues who consulted them for success in their vicious deeds".[72] They "invariably prescribed a big sacrifice to be performed for the fulfilment of every kind of desire so that they may get a chance to enjoy their wealth and women".[73] Faith in these *gurus* was so common that they had easy access to the noble families and seduced the noble women.[74] The use of black magic was the main instrument used by them to exploit the people.[75]

Kṣemendra also refers to an interesting trend among the Śaiva *gurus* which has a special significance for us. He says that it had become a commonplace practice among them to change the cults:

> *Sobhūtpūrvataram Bauddhastato dambhāya Vaiṣnavah*
> *Rakśār thamatha bhāryayā jātakaulāgamādarah.*[76]

It is important to mention that the scriptures constituted only one of the three authorities of Kashmiri Śaivism. The other two equally important authorities were: experienced preceptors and one's own initiative and self-experience to which was given the highest importance.[77] It is, therefore, no wonder that Kashmiri Śaivism grew and became a strong protest movement against both Brāhmaṇical religion and its own one-time important rituals and practices. The blunt exponent of this reformulated Śaivism is the 14th century Śaiva yogini, Lalla. While she mocks the Brāhmanical religion and social order, she is no less critical of reducing Śaivism to sensualism and sorcery. Although Trika philosophy, to which Lalla is supposed to have belonged, approves enjoying five *makārās*, there is not even a slight mention alluding to Lalla's faith in *Pānchtattava*; instead she openly abhors these practices.[78] In order to see how in the 14th century Kashmiri Śaivism bordered on the spirit of Islam, it is important to quote a few of her verses in which she scoffs at exterior manifestations of religious practices (such as idol worship, temple practices, elaborate sacrifices and offerings and pilgrimages to holy places), caste taboos, asceticism and Tantric practices; on the contrary she emphasises internalisation of God by realizing the self and removing the haze of duality and shunning greed, lust and pride.

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[69] *Deśopadeśa*, p.23.

[70] Ibid.

[71] *Narmamālā*, p.29., Parihāsa 111. Verse 29.

[72] Ibid., pp. 23-27.

[73] Ibid.

[74] *Deśopadeśa*, pp.24-25.

[75] *Śaivagamas*, pp. 116- 117; *Deśopadeśa*, p. 22; *Rājataranginī* , iv. 88, 112, 114, 124, 686; v.239; vi. 108-112, 121, 310, 312; vii. 133.

[76] *Narmamālā*, p.22.

[77] *Īśvarapratyabhijnā-Vimarśinī*,4-1-16. Vide, *Aspects of Kashmiri Saivism*, p. 188.

Would you understand what oneness is?
It has turned me into nothingness:
Though he is One, Alone, and All,
Yet I am caught in the War of Two.
Though He has neither colour nor form
Yet I am caught in His wondrous forms.[79]

The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone.
Whom will you worship, O stubborn Pandit?
Let *prāna* and the mind unite.[80]

Thou art the earth, Thou art the sky,
Thou art the air, the day and the night;
The sacrificial corn Thou,
And unction of the sandal paste.
Thou art the water, Thou art the flowers,
Thou art all these and everything.
What may I, in worship, bring to Thee?[81]

The pilgrim sannyāsin goes from shrine to shrine,
Seeking to meet Him who abides within himself.[82]

Why do you grope thus like the blind?
Pray, doubt not what I say to you:
If you are wise, enter within

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[78] The *vaakh*, '*voth ranyo artsun sokhar*....' suggests a feeling of indifference to, if not positive disapproval of the *Vamācāri* ritual. For details, see B.N. Parimoo, *The Ascent of Self*, pp. 26-30.

[79] Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*, p. 129.

[80] Ibid., p. 110.

[81] Ibid., p. 111.

[82] Ibid., p. 124.

And see the Lord Himself is there.
You need not search for Him here and there.[83]

The thoughtless read the holy books,
As parrots, in their cage, recite "*Rām, Rām.*"
Their reading is like churning water,
Fruitless effort, ridiculous conceit.[84]

I have worn out my palate and tongue reading the holy books,
But I have not learnt the practices that would please my Lord.
I have worn thin my finger and thumb telling the rosary beads,
But I have not been able to dispel duality from my mind.[85]

O fool, right action does not lie in observing fasts and
ceremonial rites.
O fool, right action does not lie in providing bodily comfort and ease.
In contemplation of the Self alone is right action and right counsel for you.[86]

I renounced fraud, untruth, deceit;
I taught my mind to see the One in all my fellow-men.
How could I then discriminate between man and man
And not accept the food offered to me by brother man?[87]

To stop a running stream, to cool a raging fire,
To roam the skies on sandalled feet,
To milk a wooden cow –
All this is fraud and jugglery.[88]
A royal fly-whisk, sunshade, chariot and throne,
Merry revels, pleasures of the theatre, a bed of cotton down –
Which of these, you think, will go with you when you are dead?
How then can you dispel the fear of death?[89]

Why have you sunk deep in the sea of the illusory pleasures of the world?
Why have you pulled down the high-banked road which would have led
you safe across?
The dense darkness of *tamas* surrounds you now, and, at the appointed time,
Yama's apparitors prepare to drag your body bleeding to death.
Who can dispel your fear of death?[90]

This counsel to the body give, O Soul:
Wear only such clothes as ward off cold;

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83 Ibid., p. 105.
84 Ibid., p. 104.
85 Ibid., pp. 103-104.
86 Ibid., pp. 107-108.
87 Ibid., p. 107.
88 Ibid., p. 125.
89 Ibid., p. 94.
90 Ibid.

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Eat only to satisfy your hunger;
Devote yourself with all your heart to the knowledge of the Supreme Self.[91]

In life I sought neither wealth nor power,
Nor ran after the pleasures of sense.
Moderate in food and drink, I lived a controlled life.
Patiently bore my lot, my pain and poverty, and loved my God.[92]

Who slays the highway robbers three, Greed, Lust and Pride,
And yet, in utter humility, serves his fellow-men–
He truly seeks out the Lord, disregarding as worthless ashes all other things.[93]

Slay the murderous demons, Lust, Anger, and Greed;
Or, aiming their arrows at you, they will surely shoot you dead.
Take care, feed them on self-restraint and discrimination of the Self;
Thus starved, these demons will become powerless and weak.[94]

Given the close affinity between the teachings of Lalla and the basic spirit of Islam, it is easy to understand why the later Sūfis of Kashmir count her among the greatest women Sūfis of Islam[95] and also why some modern scholars consider her a convert to Islam. It may, however be mentioned that Lalla is not an aberration;[96] instead she represents a strong non-conformist tradition of Kashmir which she preserved, thanks to her poetic genius. Written in her mother tongue – Kashmiri – her *vaakh* made Lalla not only popular but an abiding saint *par-excellence*. The others of Lalla's stock did not have this advantage. Perhaps the *gurus* of the movement were neither poets nor writers; which is why they have sunk in oblivion. However, Lalla does not miss to mention her preceptor. Infact she gives the whole credit to her *guru* for all her spiritual accomplishments:

My Guru gave me but one precept:
"From without withdraw your gaze within
And fix it on the Inmost Self'

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[91] Ibid., p. 100.

[92] Ibid., p. 98.

[93] Ibid., p. 101.

[94] Ibid.

[95] *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 37 ab, 38a

[96] Considering Kashmiri Śaivism's disapproval of exterior manifestations of religious practices and caste system, it is perhaps difficult to agree with Ishaq Khan's bold statement that "many of her [Lall's] ideas, voicing dissent against the existing institutions and values, were not echoed by even a single Śaivaite who can be named during her life or after her death" *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p. 72.

Taking to heart this one precept,
Naked I began to roam.[97]

O Guru, you are as a god to me,
Tell me you know the secret truth.
Both *Prāna*-s rise from 'Kandapura',
the "place of the Bulb", the navel region
Why is *hāh* hot, why is *hūh* cold?[98]

True, the tradition of heterodoxy was so old and so strong in Kashmir that Tirumular, the earliest of the Siddhas of Tamil Nadu assigned to the second half of the seventh century, is believed to have come from Kashmir.[99] Siddhas, it may be mentioned, were anti-ritual, anti-ceremonial and anti-caste[100]. There is almost total absence of any cult of a local deity in the poems of Tirumular.[101] Just as we find in Kashmir theistic non-conformism growing and culminating in blunt and direct attacks on the established religious order by the time of Lalla, similarly among Tamil Siddhas we notice rebellion against the Brāhmanical order becoming blunt and direct as the time passed.[102] Interestingly, the substance, tone and tenor of the poems of the Tamil Siddhas closely fall in line with the outspoken *vaakh* of Lalla.[103]

Besides the theistic non-conformism, we also come across a powerful group of atheists in Kashmir. From Jayantabhatta, Kṣemendra, Kalhana and Jonarāja's brief but illustrative mention it appears beyond doubt that the atheists had become a force to reckon with and were posing a serious challenge to the existing religious and social order.[104] Needless to emphasise that atheists of Kashmir were not a unique body of non-believers. They were, on the other hand, an integral part of a pan-Indian tradition. In this connection the *Carvākas*, who resolutely defied the authority of the scriptures and severely attacked the *brāhmanas* and their rituals, deserve special mention.[105]

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[97] Jayalal Kaul, op. cit., p.97.

[98] Ibid., p. 120.

[99] K. Meenakshi, "The Siddhas of Tamil Nadu", in R. Champakalakshmi and S. Gopal (eds.), *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology*, pp. 128-29.

[100] Ibid., pp. 111-134.

[101] Ibid., p. 116.

[102] Ibid., pp. 116 sqq.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Jayantabhatta, *Āgamadambara* (ed. by Dr. Raghvan), Act III; Kṣemendra, *Nītikalpataru* 130.1- 11; *Rājataranginī*, iv. 345; Jonarāja, p. 14.

[105] Sheshibhushan Dasgupta, *Obscure Religious Cults*, Calcutta 1976 (Orig. ed., 1946), p. 69.

The voices of dissent seeking a rupture with the past had to face stiff opposition from the forces of continuity which commanded power and influence. The persecution which Lalla had to face from the dominant Brāhmanical tradition is borne out by no less a person than she herself:

Let them mock at me and call me names.
If a true devotee of Śiva I be,
I shall not feel distressed nor hurt.
Can a few ashes a mirror befoul?[106]

Still more opposition was faced by the atheists as we find the *brāhmanas* pressurizing the rulers to withdraw patronage from all those who " deny the existence of God"[107] While the *brāhmanas* disowned the non-conformists, it is interesting to see the Muslim saints elevating them to the position of the greatest mystics of Islam. Contrary to the suppression of the very mention of such a seer like Lalla by the contemporary *brāhmana* chroniclers, she is bestowed upon with such coveted titles as *Rabi'a Thani*, *'Ārifa*, *Maryam'i Makānī*, *Majnūn* etc., by the Sūfīs.[108] At any rate, the theistic non- conformism represented by Lalla provided the historical context within which the powerful cult of the Muslim Rishis emerged in the late 14th century. This fact is vindicated by no other than the founder of the Rishi order, Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, himself:

That Lalla of Padmanpōr,
Who had drunk the nectar,
She was an *avatar* of ours
O God, give me the same spiritual power.[109]

Notwithstanding the persecution faced by the dissenters from the dominant discourse, they, however, remained firm on the ground rather than succumb and get the dissent to be swallowed up by the tradition through a controlled and guided process of hegemonization in which the state played a crucial role:

To quote Lalla:

They may abuse me or jeer at me,
They may say what pleases them,
They may with flowers worship me,
What profits them whatever they do?

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106 Jeyalal Kaul, op cit., p. 102.
107 *Nītikalpataru*, 13.1 -11.
108 ~~*Tadhkirat al*~~*-Ārifīn*, ff. 37 ab, 38a.
109 Amin Kamil, *Nūr- nāma*, p.53.

I am indifferent to praise and blame.[110]

Instead of getting distressed and leaving the field to the forces of dominance, the voices ~~of counter-culture~~ had such a firm conviction in what they called their "Truth of Truths" that all those who refused to go along with them were castigated as *mudas* (ignoramuses) *séki shāth* (sandy dunes), *khar* (asses) – in ~~fact something which is useless to work upon~~:

Swayikul no dwada sāti sagize
Sarpini thūlan dizi no phah
Séki shāthas phal no wovize
Rāviy kōm-yājan til.
Mudas Jñānac kath no vonize
Kharas gor dina rāviy dōh

Do not water the nettle with milk,
Nor hatch the eggs of snake.
Do not sow the seed on a sandy dune,
Nor waste your oil on cakes of bran.
Impart no true knowledge to fools,
Nor on molasses feed an ass[111].

It may, however, be noted that although the forces of contestation were too strong to be uprooted, they could only affirm rather than displace the power of dominant ideals. With kings and upper castes (who were also landed magnates and big employers) as supporters of Brāhamanic tradition, it was not without inviting serious risks to take a front against the dominant tradition. This partly explains why the counter-culture could not become a mass movement. As a matter of fact, only the selected few like Lalla could put up with the persecution which their opposition entailed:

When can I break the bonds of Shame?
When I am indifferent to jibes and jeers.
When can I discard the robe of dignity?
When desires cease to nag my mind.[112]

Persecuted at home by the dominant discourse, the non-conformism was, on the other hand, received with open arms by the intrusive Islam, which found in it a synchronizing voice. Thus the two ideals with common outlook merged into one integrative vision in an environment, which demanded little give and take.

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[110] Jayalal Kaul, p. 102

[111] B.N. Parimoo, op. cit., p. 17.

[112] Jayalal Kaul, p. 103.

Despite having arrayed themselves against the ideology that critiqued and rejected tradition, it may, however, be wrong to assume that the forces, which favoured continuity, regarded tradition as sacrosanct and monolithic. For its own survival in the face of varied pressures, the tradition had no other alternative save to be fluid and dynamic. Let us take the example of Vedic-Śaiva Brāhmanism – the most powerful cult of Kashmir especially from the tenth century onwards. We see its pantheon having been drawn from various sources. Thus alongside the Vedic gods one finds, Śiva, Viśnu, Surya, Bhairava, Ganesha, Kamadeva and Śakti under various names.[113] The deep seated impact of Tantricism on Vedic Śaivites can be had from their appropriation of many Tantric rituals which alongside the Vedic rituals came to be recognized as fundamental principles in achieving union with Śiva. In this regard mention be made of their concept of Śakti in its various forms, the *lingam* worship, the awakening of *kundalini* by yoga, the idea of deities presiding over the different parts of the body and their outward symbolic representation by means of mystic diagrams, the different *ācāras* followed in worship, the recitation of *mantras*, the necessity of rituals, the spiritual discipline in company with women, etc.[114]. Another important feature of this new Brāhmanism was that the folk belief, viz, the worship of springs, streams, rivers and other water bodies was fully adopted and the sacred spots of the triblas were included as new places of pilgrimage (*tīrtha*) with suitable myths to make them respectable.[115] The deep-rooted reverence for Buddha among the masses was also accommodated by prescribing reverential celebration of his birthday.[116] For striking the balance between the Vedic and local sources of authority *Purānas* were written as elsewhere in India, by local *brāhmanas* who were in a position to assess the points of minimum compatibility between different traditions.[117] This technique of absorbing local cults and associated practices for widening the social base of Brāhmanical social order in different regions is known as *Purānic process.*[118]

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[113] For details, see *Śaivāgamas*, op.cit.

[114] Ibid., p. 82.

[115] See *Nīlamatapurāṇa and Māhātmyas*

[116] Ibid.

[117] Besides the well-known *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, we also come across an *Upapurāṇa, Viṣṇudharmottra* which, too, was composed in Kashmir. (R.C. Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas*, vol. i, p.214.). This clearly points to the fact that *Purāṇa* writing was a well-established tradition in Kashmir although only one or two have survived to us.

[118] Kunal Chakrabarti, "Texts and Traditions: The Making of the Bengal *Purāṇas*", in R. Champakalakshmi and S. Gopal (eds.) *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology*, p.64.

In effect, the emergence of myriad cults, the binary opposition between the dominant tradition and dissent and the *Purāṇic process* all point to the same conclusion: religion was not something a bundle of fixed attitudes which could not be reformulated, changed or even challenged in the light of new experiences. To be sure, religious history of Kashmir prior to Islam is nothing but a record of assimilation of innovation, adaptation, compromise, reformulation and above all a search for truth – the truth to be discovered by each generation. There was all along a section of intellectuals who were always in the process of becoming and never fully formed. It was largely because of these dynamic and changing actors that we see a dynamic and changing religious history. The track record of past changes as well as existing changes were thus indicative that further changes were imminent.

Another important factor that had accounted for religious change in the past and was posited to bring them in future too, was the *rājā*-centred and religion-centred polity in an ideologically fragmented social aura. In the *rājā*-centred polity where the personal beliefs and convictions of the rulers guided the state policy, service to one's religion/sect/ belief figured prominently among the priorities before each ruler to satisfy his psychological states and to earn societal acclaim. If a ruler happened to be a 'non-member' i.e. not belonging to the dominant religious group of his subjects, either because of having acquired the territory by conquest or being the member of a minority religious group, in that case the motives of political mobilisation added to his zeal to patronize his personal religion. Thus the main frontier of the society that we find undergoing vital change after the change of rulers (belonging to different faiths) used to be invariably religion. To substantiate this argument one may readily quote the changing religious history of Kashmir along with the change of rulers belonging to different religious persuasions. For example, as long as the Buddhists ruled Kashmir, Buddhism was not only the mass religion of Kashmir but, more importantly, the Valley had become one of the greatest centres of Buddhist learning.[119] However, when in A.D. 515 the zealot Śaiva, Miharkula, ascended the throne he ruthlessly exterminated Buddhism and established his own faith.[120] Śaivism continued to be a dominant cult till the late sixth century when Śaiva rulers were replaced by Vaiśnavas; [121] and Vaiśnavism became the dominant cult ~~especially~~ under the Karkotas (A.D.625-855), primarily because of the royal patronage.[122] During the Utapalas and Loharas Kashmir became a famous centre of two divergent ideologies: Tantric Śaivism and Smarta Śaivism-Vaiśnavism. Smarta Śaivism- Vaiśnavism which was an amalgam of Śaiva and Vaiśnava cults with a belief in *Vedic* and *Smrti* rites flourished in Kashmir because the rulers, with exceptions, belonged to this ideological group.[123]

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[119] See Sarla Khosla, *History of Buddhism in Kashmir*; Jean Neudou, *Buddhists of Kashmir*; J.N. Ganhar and P.N. Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*; Advaitavadini Kaul, *Buddhist Savants of Kashmir: Their Contribution*

[120] Both Sung-Yun and Hieun Tsang say that Miharkula was a sworn enemy of Buddhism who massacred a large number of Buddhists and destroyed their places of worship. Although Kalhana was a devotee of Śiva, he does not hide the wanton cruelty of

This long historical tradition of change of religions/cults with the change of rulers produced some important results with far-reaching bearings on future religious change. These were: 1. it legitimized the role of the state in favour of winning conversions to the personal faith of the ruler; 2. it created a mass mentality favouring the attitude that the only legitimate religion is the religion of the ruler; 3. it made religion something wedded to *rājāship* rather than a sacred bundle of attitudes involved with emotions and, therefore, difficult to compromise; 4. change of religions/cults cultivated a latitudinarian mental climate with a capacity to accommodate new changes though without completely parting with the old habits which was never insisted upon, instead intellectual attempts were made under state patronage to assimilate folk beliefs to satisfy the conditions of congruence and compatibility.[124]

The process of conversion at the initiative of the sate was further facilitated by the systematic projection of the divinity of kings by the *brāhmanas* who dominated the religious scene of Kashmir for about nine hundred years before the establishment of Muslim Sultanate. The ideological apparatus devised by the *brāhmanas*, ascribing spiritual authority to kingship is evident from the titles, epithets, formulae, rituals, position and function of kingship. Sometimes the ruler was

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Miharkula though without mentioning that Buddhists became the target of his reign of terror. *Rājatarangini*, i. 289-293. However, Kalhana clearly says that Mihirakula was a devotee of Śiva (Ibid., 306), which receives confirmation from the ruler's coins, which contain in them therimorphic representation of Śiva. V. Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, vol. I, pl. xxxv, 5.

[121] From the time of Paivarsena II who ruled towards the close of the sixth century A.D. royal patronage tilted more in favour of Vaiśnavism though Śaivism and Buddhism were also revered simultaneously *Rājatarangini*, iii. 350 sqq.

[122] Ibid., Book, iv.

[123] This is clear not only from *Rājatarangini* but also from the coins, sculptures and monuments of the period.

[124] Mention may be made of *Puranic process.*

declared as having born of a portion of Śiva,[125] and sometimes he was referred to as *Paramamaheśvara*,[126] or as an *avatāra* of Rāma;[127] sometimes he was compared with Viṣṇu and Indra[128] and sometimes with *Dikpālas* (Indra, Varuna, Kubera, etc.).[129] A virtuous king could even subdue gods:[130] "The commands of kings who truthfully keep to their duty cannot be disregarded by Indra, Brāhma and the helpless Yama,"[131] to say least by the people. If the people refuse to obey the king, "he is morally obliged to punish them."[132] It is significant that the protection ~~and pro~~motion of *dharma* was regarded the primary duty of the king.[133] ~~Jayanta Bhatta~~ calls the King Śaṅkaravarman, 'the preceptor of the traditions of *Varṇāśramadharma*' and the one who knows the essence of *dharma* (*dharmatatvajna*) and enforces it ruthlessly and impartially by means of *danda*.[134] According to Kalhana it is the work of noble-minded kings to protect the laws of *varna* and *aśrama* in the benighted *kali yuga* when the challenges of heterodoxy and the infiltration of diverse ethnic groups threaten the established order of society.[135] The religion-centred polity is also testified by the essentially religious titles as *dharmadhvaja*, *dharmaketu*, *dharmādhipati* and *dharmatattavajna* by which the king was described.[136] The *rājā* embodied legitimate power by virtue of its consecration by his *brāhmana purohit*, who represented sacrality.[137]

By working out a godly position for the *rājā* and investing him with unlimited powers central to which was enforcing *dharma*, the *brāhamanas* conferred upon the kingship the status of spiritual importance and legitimized the role of the king as a sanctifier and belief-giver. Though the *brāhmanas* had ascribed divinely position and absolute powers to the king with the principal objective to augment his position and authority for establishing Brāhmanical social order, in the process it ran the risk of proving self-contradictory and counteractive. Contrary to proving supportive for *dharma* for its perpetuity, it made kingship sacred in the popular mind. Ideological apparatus, as the one contrived by the *brāhmanas* for preservation of the Brāhmanic social order, was bound to prove self-defeating in a milieu which saw a spurt in the rise of antagonistic ideologies each with a potential to capture power. Co-operative activities like the one envisaged by the *brāhmanas* could cohere only as long as there was no other ideology powerful enough to assume power. Such was not the milieu in question. Having ended up in making the *rājā* god-like and even legitimizing his authority to use maximum power to enforce his personal belief, the ideological apparatus worked out by the *brāhmanas* paved the way for future religious changes either by simply emulating the ruler whose god-like position was systematically made to get embedded in popular imagination, or by legitimizing the religion-centred polity. It is, therefore, no wonder to see people following the faiths of the rulers without demur even if the ruler was cruel or even if his faith was quite contrary to the established order and the ruler stayed for a small period.[138] Considering the past history, it is quite reasonable to agree with a contemporary chronicler who says that when Rinchana embraced Islam, he was followed by a large group of people.[139]

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[125] V.N.Drabu, *Kashmir Polity*, p. 54.

[126] *Āgamaḍambara*, iv. 2.

[127] ~~*Kashmir Polity*,~~ op.cit., p. 54.

[128] *Rājataraṅginī*, iv. 7; viii. 1199.

[129] *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, 21. 12; 90 comm.

[130] *Rājataraṅginī*, iii. 53.

[131] Ibid., 11, 47. Also see *Āgamaḍambara*, 2 *passim*.

[132] *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, 838, 839.

[133] ~~*Kashmir Polity*, p. 60.~~

[134] *Āgamaḍambara*, Act II, p. 44; *Nyāyamañjarī*, p. 271.

[135] *Rājataraṅginī*, i. 115-117, 179, 312-316.

[136] *Kashmir polity*, p. 71.

[137] *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, 807 ff.

Sharing the values of the time and meeting the demands of reciprocity, the rulers bestowed lavish *agrahāras* (rent-free land grants), gifts and presents upon the *brāhmanas* and the temples,[140] leading to the emergence of a powerful *brāhmana* class and the temple dotted Valley,[141] which acted as powerful vehicles for the advancement of Brāhmanic religious and social order. While this copious patronage benefited the religiously-expressed interests for some time, it, however, proved beset with serious inherent contradictions. Having been nurtured in luxuries and brought up to live in opulent riches as well as to become courtiers and king-makers, the central parts of the *brāhmana* consciousness got occupied by rank mundane thinking, the details of which are given in the following Section. Certainly, to a large section of

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[138] In this regard conversion of people to Śavism by Mihirakula is a case in point.

[139] Haidar Malik, p. 38.

[140] *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, i. 87,88,90,96,98,100,121,175,307,311, 314,340,341, 343; ii.55; iii. 376, 481; iv.9,639; v.23,24,170,397,403,442; vi.89,336; vii.182,184,185,608,698,699,908; viii.2408,2419,2420,3355.

[141] Ibid., i,38.

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the *brāhmanas* interest in Brāhmanism got ultimately wedded to the worldly benefits of the religion rather than in the religion itself. Little wonder, then, that we find many of them changing religions and cults frequently even before the Sultanate.[142] And when, after the establishment of the Sultanate, patronage shifted in favour of Islam many of them, consistent with their past history, could not resist material temptations offered by the new religion.[143] Secondly, having control over the formidable resources – *agrahāras*, temples and *asthāpanas* – the *brāhmanas* became a formidable pressure group. Perhaps nowhere did the *brāhmanas* emerge as great a political power as we find them in Kashmir.[144] However, they had internalized such a gigantic greed for wealth that they used this power to coerce the state to accede to their ever-increasing profane demands.[145] As a result they, according to Kalhana, became 'worse than rebellious Lavanyas,'[146] 'a disease of the throat'[147] and 'like a hostile army'[148] for the king. While this 'intriguing' role exacerbated political chaos and the ultimate fall of the *rajan* (rule) of the *rājās*, it simultaneously degenerated the *brāhmanas* from 'gods of the earth', the position arrogated by them for themselves,[149] to, in the words of Kalhana, 'vallains,'[150] 'plunderers',[151] 'wretches',[152] 'rebellious Lavanyas'[153] and 'intriguers'[154] 'who could be purchased by offering bribes'.[155] Also, the luxurious lifestyle, on account of the appropriation of *agrahāra* grants and gifts and presents, created strong vested interests in them to maintain their existing position to the exclusion of all others. Thus we find the *Smarta brāhmanas* (the followers of *Vedic* and *Smrti* rites) busy in claiming an Aryan identity[156] and exclusivity to be distinguished from, what they called, the impure and inferior *brāhmanas*.[157] They also became the ideologues of the upper-caste landowners[158] and their patrons, even though the latter were ruthlessly oppressive towards the masses.[159] This and their insistence on maintaining *varna* system even though it would entail ruthless enforcement[160] deprived Brāhmanism of mass support. Under these conditions Brāhmanical order could survive only as long as it enjoyed the state support. And when its patrons fell from power, it also fell with it.

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[142] *Narmamālā*, p. 22, *Parthāvo* II, verse, 101.

[143] Jonarāja, p. 60.

[144] See infra, pp. 162, 179-81.

[145] Ibid.

[146] *Rājataranginī*, viii 776.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid., 773.

[149] Ibid., 2238.

[150] Ibid., 772.

[151] Ibid., 774.

[152] Ibid. 775.

[153] Ibid. 776.

[154] Ibid. 777.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Infra, pp. 273-74

Before concluding this discussion we have also to bear in mind another important fact which along with other factors had decisive consequences for the course of Kashmir history in general and conversions to Islam in particular. It was the division of society into two broad categories of people, viz, the elite known as *khās* and the laity known as *ām*, the former a small minority but a dominant one and the latter a large majority but bereft of ideology and, therefore, herded or mobalized by the *khās*. Hence whether it was Smarta Śaivism or Smarta Vaiśnavism, Tantricism or Tantric Śavism, atheism or the Śaivism as represented by Lalla, all these *isms* were the exclusive provinces of the elite sections of the society, having acquired either through ascriptive resources as domestic culture or formal learning or both, or created by applying their distinctive cognitive faculties or adopted any one of the prevalent discourses with conviction after having been intellectually satisfied by it. To which mental realm did the common people belong? What religion did they follow? How and why did they adopt it? For a proper understanding of these questions we have to invoke the help of philology and folklore besides the conventional sources. In the local parlance the common people are known by the generic term *muda* meaning ignorant and *sādhā* (Pr. sādāh) – those who do not know the difference between '*dōn te sa'ad*' (lit. three-fourths and one and a quarter), figuratively meaning, those who do not know anything; who do not know doubting and questioning; those who simply follow the traditions, customs and beliefs bequeathed to them by their forefathers without understanding their philosophy or

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157 Ibid.

158 *Rājataranginī*. iv, 631 sqq; v. 180, 439; vii, 149.

159 While Jayanta Bhatta praises King Samakaravarman as ' the preceptor of the traditions of *Varnāśramadharma*' (*Āgamodambara*, Act II, p.44), we find from *Rājataranginī* that Samakaravarman was an oppressive ruler who imposed thirteen kinds of forced labour (*rūdhabhārodhi*) upon the villagers. *Rājataranginī*. v. 174.

160 *Kashmir polity*. op. cit., p. 60.

who just follow those elements of the society who have the resources for propaganda and cultural engineering without understanding its implications and those who do not understand and appreciate rationality. The gamut of folk mentality is captured by none of the sources as succinctly as by some often-quoted sayings:

> *Ām go kham*
>
> Common people are unripe (Masses are asses).

Or to quote this more explicit aphorism:

> *Mudon hinza maji nai presan trukain hind garah kati khasan:*
>
> If the mothers of the ignorant do not bring forth children, how can then the clever [meaning here exploiters, manipulators] prosper!

That the common people could not understand rational and selfless teachings of Lalla is evident from her loud lamentations.[161] Lalla, being a non-conformist, had no resources except her *vaakh*, which, however, could be understood only by the 'initiated'.[162] The hierarchical ordering of the society, the laborious life of the common people and the propagation of myths by the resourcefiil tradition kept the masses in great innocence. Left destitute by the oppressive state and being helpless before the vagaries of weather and recurrent famines, epidemics and diseases when there was no one and no body of empirical knowledge to turn to help or where such knowledge was plainly inadequate, it was psychologically satisfying for the common folk to turn to *sadhus*, *gurus*, priests, *tīrthas* and to varied types of ritualistic worship for miraculous help. No wonder, then, that saint worship, shrine worship, pilgrimages, animism, occultism, performing of plethora of rituals, soul - stirring recitation of *mantras* – in fact a search for fantasies and the miraculous – became fundamental to folk religion.

How this total gamut of folk society – herd mentality, innocence, destitute life and search for the miraculous- helped conversions to Islam (though only nominal conversions) is a question that we have dealt with in the following Section.

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[161] Jayalal Kaul, p. 96.

[162] Besides the fact that the diction of the *Lalla Vaakh* is often enigmatic, mysterious, hidden and full of double meanings, these pithy verses sing of mystic experiences and ecstasies of Lalla which only her fellow mystics could understand.

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Reconsidering 'Force Theory'

Whether force played any role or not in promoting conversions is a subject that has become an issue of hot debate among Kashmiri scholars. But what is unfortunate in this regard is to see the academic debate often coloured by community bias. While overlooking even some downright and glaring facts, the Kashmiri Pandit scholarship (barring a very few exceptions) attributes the conversion to force *per se*[163]. And being a traditionally literate community and, therefore, the first to receive western education, the Pandits were the first to print their point of view. The classic example of the Pandit view of conversions is contained in *The Kashmiri Pandit* by Anand Koul, published in 1924. Consider, for example, the following community legend dramatized by Koul:

> The sons of Avantivarma [Avantivarman] and Lalitaditya, and the progeny of the blessed Rishis struggled hard, and that in a peculiar way, against the brutal activity of the religiously fanatic administrators. It was neck or nothing with them in order to save their own religion. Hundreds were put to the sword, thousands were flung into the rivers and lakes or killed in their homes. With indomitable courage, both physical and moral, they faced death at the hands of the "Deputies of God."[164]

The Pandit version of conversions can also be had from the community journals, biographies, interviews and legendary history of the community[165] besides the one contained in Koul's *The Kashmiri Pandit*. After looking through these 'internal community sources' Henny Sender, the author of *The Kashmiri Pandits: A Study of Cultural Choice in North India*, found the same bees in their bonnets as one finds in the bonnet of Koul and listens to the same buzzing as one listens to from *The Kashmiri Pandit*. She writes:

> Instances of royal persecution and Brahmanical flight during the pre- Sultanate period have not imposed themselves strongly upon the collective memory of the Kashmiri Pandit community. The pre-Muslim period of Kashmir's history is remembered, instead, as a

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[163] It is significant to note that generally those few Pandit scholars could rise above the community bias who were imbued with the socialist ideology. However, as Henny Sender says, " Many of the Kashmiri Pandits who continue to harbour a broad secular vision find themselves increasingly isolated". Henny Sender, *The Kashmiri Pandits: A Study of Cultural Choice in Northern India*, intr. p.xxii.

[164] Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, p.40.

[165] For details, see Henny Sender, op. cit., Intr. and pp.1-46

> golden age, contrasting sharply with the subsequent centuries of Muslim rule.[166]

The Pandit intelligentsia not only gave a black look to the Muslim rule through their writings but, being the only literate community of Kashmir, they also influenced the European writers by acting as their informants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since the Pandit version suited the colonial interests well, it is no wonder to see even a comparatively sober English Land Revenue Settlement Officer and the author of the widely read *The Valley of Kashmir*, Walter Lawrence accepting the legendary account at its face value.[167]

Why did the modern Pandit writers choose to approach the Muslim period of Kashmir history in terms of " Muslim oppression and the heroic *brāhmana* resistance"? This question has been partly answered by Henny Sender:

> The presentation of their history by the Pandits, although written rather than oral, illustrates the manner in which a highly literate community re-interpreted its past to make that past accord more closely with present needs and changing cultural values.
>
> The purpose of the Pandits in thus reworking their history was not only to present community ideals; it was also to assert identity. The act of formulating their history, therefore, should not be understood simply as the reflection of a social group whose boundaries and identity were already sharply demarcated. As Lucy Carroll has remarked, "Caste histories should be viewed in terms of their function in defining and creating a community." The creation of common past facilitates contemporary unity.
>
> The past recalled by the Pandits thus differed substantially from the past which had actually occurred...[168]

While the partisan concerns of the migrant Pandits – who left Kashmir at varying times in the past and settled in northern India; and who are the subject of Sender's thesis – in reinterpreting their past were conditioned by their host environment,[169] the compulsions of the resident Pandits (those Pandits who did not leave their homeland) in reworking their history also reflect their own contemporary needs and values. However, though the needs of these two groups of Kashmiri Pandits sometimes varied both in substance and emphasis, nevertheless, both of them found identical interpretation of their past serving their respective needs.

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[166] Ibid.

[167] Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 190-198.

[168] Henny Sender, Intr. p.xvii.

[169] Ibid., Intr. pp.vii, 1-2, 46.

Assertion of separate and distinctive identity by the resident Kasmiri Pandits through *making* history which underlines the shared past of the community – the past marked by their persecution at the hands of the Muslim rulers –was considered a crucial need particularly at the time when Koul wrote *The Kashmiri Pandits*. It was the time when the Kashmiri Muslims had begun asserting themselves against the autocratic and feudal rule of the Dogra Maharjas [170] – the rule of which the Kashmiri Pandits constituted an important supporting structure as *chakdārs, m'āfidārs* and state servants.[171] However, notwithstanding their status as favoured subjects, the political awakening in Kashmir had the potential to cause tension within the Pandit community especially when we consider that the community was not an undifferentiated section of the society [172] and the freedom movement in India, with musings identical to Kashmir freedom movement, was at its climax and the communist ideology was causing a tempest in the minds of the sensitive souls all over the world including Kashmir.[173] In this climate of radicalism a section of the Pandit intelligentsia belonging to the upper strata of the community felt threatened as *chakdārs, m'āfīdārs* and as state functionaries. Thus to them the need of the hour was to wean away the Kashmiri Pandit community not only from the movement initiated by the Kashmiri Muslims,[174] but also from the politics of freedom the Indian environment was ringing with, as well as from the sweeping progressive ideology bruited about by the Bolshevik revolution. No wonder that they engaged themselves in cultivating a separative Pandit mentality by weaving a legendary history of Muslim oppression at a time when cross communal tolerance was considered inimical to the community's economic and monopolistic interests.

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[170] See Rashid Taseer, *Tārikh-i-Hurriyat-i Kashmir*, vol.I, pp.70-72; Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight For Freedom*, vol.1, pp.335-36.

[171] For the monopoly of *chak and m'āfi* land grants by the Kashmiri Pandits, see 'Ali Mohammad Wani, *Agrarian Structure of Kashmir* (1846-1947), unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Department of History, Kashmir University; Muhammad Yusuf Ganaie, *Emergence and Role of Muslim Conference*, unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Department of History, Kashmir University; and for the monopoly of state services by the same community, see *Riots Enquiry Committee Report*, witness of Pirzada Gulam Rasool, Headmaster, Islamia High School, Srinagar, witness No. 87; Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah, *Ātashi Chinār*, pp. 19 sqq; P.N. Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, pp. 202-203, *Siyasat*, Lahore, 7 and 8 Nov. 1923; Mohammad Afzal Husain, *Kashmir Aur Dogra Raj*, p. 41.

[172] See the Presidential address delivered by Shaikh Muhammad Abdullah to the 6th Annual session of Muslim Conference (1938). In this address the Shaikh persuaded the common Hindus and Sikhs to join the freedom movement as he regarded it nothing but a class struggle with rich Muslims and non-Muslims joining hands to perpetuate their dominance over and exploitation of the poor masses belonging to all communities–Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. For details, see S. Hussain (ed.), *Kashmiri Musalmanoo Ki Siyasi Jido Jihadi Azadi Kay Mukhtalif Dastawezat*.

[173] Cf. JKA, Political Department, File No, 166/102c of 1921,for the then British government of India taking special steps to stop what they termed 'Bolshevik literature and ideas' from entering into Kashmir. However, most of the political leaders received inspiration from the progressive elements of Punjab (F.M. Hassanain, *History of the Freedom Struggle in Kashmir*, p.111). Kashmir had so warmly responded to the Communist ideology that we find one Faiz Ahmad Piracha, a Communist surrendering the services of the Nawab of Baluchistan and settling in Kashmir in 1929 (Rashid Taseer,op.cit.,pp.210-11).It is important to mention that the Piracha started a Communist movement in Kashmir in 1931 in association with Radhay Nath Koul, a

Secondly, those were the days when European culture had begun making serious inroads into the culture of Kashmir, targeting especially the culture of the Pandit community.[175] The Christian missionaries were critiquing with enormous success the social system and religious attitudes of the *brāhmanas*.[176] This posed a serious threat to the *brāhmana* identity – the threat which the community leadership contested through many means.[177] One, but the most important,

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Kashmiri Pandit and a favourite of Bagbat group (Ibid.). As a matter of fact the socialist movement in Kashmir received nourishment from a group of intellectuals comprising both Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits. The prominent Kashmiri Pandit socialist intellectuals and activists were Janki Nath Zutshi, Pran Nath Jalali, Ram Nath Sonawali, D.P.Dhar, Pushkar Nath Zadu, Prem Nath Bazaz, Kanhaya Lal Koul and others. (Ibid., pp.210-11); also see Mohammad Yusuf Ganaie, *Dogra Raj and the Struggle For Freedom in Kashmir* (1932-1947), Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), Department of History, Kashmir University, pp,358-367)

[174] For, what Prem Nath Bazaz says, " historic role of anti-revolution to a finish" played by the Hindus before and after 1931, see P.N. Bazaz, *Inside Kashmir*, p. 291; *Statesman*, Calcutta, September 4, 1934, p. 10; *Letter from S.B. Moorji to Maharaja*, *dated August 19.1931*; *Al-Jamiat*, Delhi, August 20, 1931, p.4; *Memorial presented by the Sanatan Dharam Youngmen's Association on behalf of Kashmiri Pandits to His Highness the Maharaja Bahadur of Jammu and Kashmir*, October 24, 1931, p.3.

[175] See Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, pp. 14, 257-58, 260, 263, 266-68, 276; Tyndale Biscoe, *Autobiography*, 10, 40, 77-78, 93-94, 96-100, 131-132; Sinclair Gordon, *Khyber Caravan Through Kashmir, Waziristan, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Northern India*, pp. 56-56; *A Century of C.M.S. School (1880-1980)*; *Biscoe's Log Book: Crusading in Kashmir, 1927* (Annual Report of the C.M.S School, Srinagar).

[176] Ibid.

[177] For example, they used the state and the Hindu religious organisations of India, besides threatening the missionaries of taking their lives, to pressurize the latter to desist from educating the *brāhmana* boys of Christian missionary schools against the caste taboos and practices. *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.110; Sinclair, op.cit., p. 56; *A Crusader in Kashmir*, Chapter III. Besides, they formed many religious organisations and founded many schools to counter the Christian missionary movement. For the mushroom growth of Hindu religious and social organizations in Kashmir with the dawn of the twentieth century, see File No: 264/p.21, years 1928; File No. 312/7-c, 1919, Jammu Archives.

resource employed to checkmate the cultural onslaught was to reinforce the confidence of the community in its established socio-religious order by defending its structures and magnifying the past history and achievements of the community. To be sure, this is what Koul's book is all about.[178] That the *brāhmanas* clung to their religion even at the cost of their lives during the 'barbarous rule' of the Muslims[179] and that they proved themselves "as an exceptionally genius group by adhering to the *varnāshramadharma*"[180] has been used by Koul as grist for his mill to reinvigorate his community's confidence in the religion which was under serious threat because of the Pandits' fast emulation of western culture in the wake of their adoption of western education[181] to retain their traditional calling – state service.[182] Confidence building exercise also required the creation of propaganda literature to create a strong collective mentality especially among the younger generation that Islam did not spread in Kashmir because of any weakness in the Brāhmanic religious and social order; but it spread because of persecution before which only the *brāhmana* caste could survive by putting heroic resistance against force.[183] It may, however, be mentioned that this theory was not invented by nineteenth and twentieth century Pandit elite. They only blew up the one which was actually invented by fifteenth-sixteenth century *brāhmana* chroniclers for the same purpose for which the former hammed it up.[184]

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[178] Besides the fact that each sentence of Koul's book is aimed at reinforcing the faith of the Pandit youth in Brāhmanical religion, he, in his preface, makes it quite clear that he is only worried how the community would be ~~preserved in~~ the face of fast changes of the time: -

> "May the Almighty preserve this small community under the shelter of his powerful wing, secure against all the changes and chances of the passing years, and may their golden years return! They are among the few races still remaining on earth whose traditions run back to the gods and the divine origin of things". Koul, Preface, p.vi.

[179] Ibid., p.10, 40.

[180] Ibid., pp.1, 10. See also, pp. 69-78.

[181] In this regard it is interesting to quote Tydale Biscoe: "When I arrived at the Church Mission School in Srinagar, I found it full of the sons of the Hindu ruling class, the top-dogs in this Muhammadan country. Over ninety percent of the Kashmiris are Muhammadans. Those sitting before me in the school were the sons of the slave dealers not the slaves, for the Muhammadans did not send their sons to schools as all government service was closed to them". *Autobiography*, op. cit., p. 52.

[182] That knowing the English language was a must for aspiring good positions in state service and that the Kashmiri Pandits, consistent with their long tradition of quick response to learn official languages, realized the critical importance of learning English for maintaining their position, it is in place to quote Tyndale Biscoe who refers to the utilitarian background of Pandits' interest in studying Bible:

> Soon after my arrival in Kashmir I received calls from Hindu Youths wishing to read the Bible with me... They came for two reasons. One was that they wished to learn English from an Englishman and they asked us to use the English Bible instead of the Urdu Bible. But what was more important, was that we might become interested in them personally and find lucrative posts for them in government service, with a few other advantages thrown in. Autobiography, op. cit., p. 114.

It is worth noticing that whenever any political movement was initiated by the Kashmiri Muslims, a section of the Pandit intelligentsia immediately swung into action to wean away the community from the majority politics by invoking and evoking history, to present the Muslim period of Kashmir history as the darkest period, to justify communalism. Not surprisingly, over the past decade there has been a spurt of such literature produced by a section of Kashmiri Pandit historians, journalists and others who chose to leave the Valley in the wake of political turmoil in Kashmir.[185] In the words of Henny Sender:

> The early history of the Kashmiri Brahmans as they themselves have remembered and recorded it illustrates Jan Vansina's description of testimony as a mirage of reality, distorted by the defence of private interests and influenced by changed cultural values. Tradition, Vansina writes, is adapted to current concepts; it exists only because it serves society. The purpose of tradition is to facilitate adaptation to one's social environment.[186]

However, it is gratifying to note that out of thirty-two Sultāns who ruled Kashmir between 1339 and 1586. i.e., for about two hundred and forty-seven years, the Pandit scholars in question could not get more than two rulers and a period not exceeding twenty to thirty years to reinterpret their past to meet the exigencies of the time.

The very argument of force seems a trivial talk if we bear in mind that the Muslim Sultanate in Kashmir did not come into existence because of any conquest of the Valley by the Muslim armies; instead, it was a peaceful transition of power from the weak rulers of a ramshackle kingdom to a Muslim settler, Shāh Mīr, who by demonstrating his extraordinary capabilities as a saviour of the people forced even a diehard conservative *brāhmana* like Jonarāja to acknowledge: "Strange that this believer in Alla [Allah] became the saviour of the people".[187]

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183 Koul, op. cit., pp. 10, 49.

184 Jonarāja, pp. 60, 66-67.

185 For example, see Mohan Lal Koul, *Kashmir Past and Present: Unravelling the Mystique*. New Delhi, 1994.

186 Henny Sender, op cit., p. 2

187 Jonarāja, p. 26.

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So unlike the Muslim Sultanates elsewhere, the foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir was purely a turn over of public opinion. That no military hordes with superior military technology forced their way into Kashmir and backed the foundation and establishment of the Sultanate is sufficient proof to refute the veracity of force theory of conversions. As a matter of fact, for their survival the Muslim rulers were mainly dependent upon the local nobility, army and people who, barring a handful number, were all non-Muslims.[188] It is, therefore, naive to harp on the force theory, especially when we know that the local nobility was so powerful that no ruler could afford to remain on the throne even for a while without enjoying the full support of what Kalhana calls *dāmaras*.[189] The overwhelming power of the non-Muslims can be gauged by the fact that it forced the early Sultāns to behave as non-Muslims even in their private lives.[190]

The force theory loses further credibility when we keep in mind that the first known convert to Islam was the ruler of the time, Cha-can-rgyal-bu-rin-chen, a Ladakhi Buddhist settler, popularly known as Rinchan or Rincbana. After assuming power in 1320, he embraced Islam at the hands of a renowned Sūfī saint, Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn.[191] Strangely enough, the contemporary Sanskrit chronicler observes silence over this far-reaching event except for mentioning a seemingly cooked story, that Rinchana approached the *brāhmana*, Devaswāmi by name, and asked him " to initiate him in the mantras of Śiva but as Rinchana was a *Bhoota* [a Ladakhi Buddhist], Devaswāmi feared that the king was unworthy of such initiation, and did not favour him."[192] Since maintaining total silence over the *rājā's* well-known cravings to follow a religion other than his own would make Jonarāja a dubious authority, and as the force theory would appear absurd in case of the conversion of the *rājā*, and as the acknowledgement of whole truth behind this conversion would show Islam in brighter colours, the *brāhmana* chronicler opted for a safer version: he belittled the importance of the king's conversion to Islam by not mentioning it at all save make Devaswāmi reject his quest to be initiated into Śaivism as if

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[188] Even during the reign of Qutub al-Din (1373-1389) the majority of the nobles belonged to the non-Muslim community. Sayyid 'Ali, op. cit., f. 5b.

[189] *Rājataranginī*, Books v, vi, vii and viii. Also, see Jonarāja, pp. 1-56

[190] Supra, p.57

[191] Ibid., p.53

[192] Jonarāja, pp. 20-21.

Devaswāmi was the only authority to allow or disallow one to enter into the Hindu fold and as if Śaivism was closed to *Bhottas*.

After Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn, we come across a group of missionaries headed by two saints – Sayyid Taj al-Dīn and Sayyid Husain Simnānī – who came to Kashmir during the reign of Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn (1354-1373).[193] Although both the saints are famous for having won conversions,[194] Jonarāja observes total silence about them. The Sanskrit chronicler's omission is understandable because there was no room to argue for the force theory of conversion. Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn was undoubtedly a very strong ruler, but his strength was rooted in the whole-hearted co-operation be received from the nobility, the majority of whom were non-Mulsim.[195] His two most favourite queens – Lakśmi and Lasa – were also non-Muslim. And they seem to have been allowed to keep faith with their own un-Islamic belief system.[196] The Sultān was so tolerant towards the other faiths that instead of getting influenced by his Hindu Wazír's suggestion to melt the images of gods to meet the financial crisis, he, according to Jonarāja, snubbed him saying:

> Past generations have set up images to obtain fame and earn merit, and you propose to demolish them. Some have obtained renown by setting up images of gods, others, by worshipping them, some, by duly maintaining them, and some, by demolishing them! How great is the enormity of such a deed ... When the king had spoken thus, Udayaśri held down his head, as if seeking for a hole in the ground, wishing to go down into the interior of the death.[197]

The pace of conversion was unprecedently accelerated and the commitment to Islam (of those who had been previously converted) extra-ordinarily deepened following the arrival of Sayid 'Alī Hamdānī during the reign of Sultān Qutub al-Dīn (1373-89).[198] But it is interesting to note that notwithstanding the Sultān's highest regards for the Sayyid, the latter did not receive any political support from the Sultān save *madad-i-ma'ash* grants to his disciples. The Sultān did not formulate the state laws on the lines of the *Shari'ah* as desired by the

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[193] Supra, p.55

[194] Ibid., p.56

[195] Jonarāja, pp. 43-44; Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5b.

[196] Jonarāja, pp. 42-43.

[197] Ibid., pp. 43-44

[198] Supra, pp.57-62

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Sayyid,[199] to say least of using force or placing the state machinery at the disposal of the saint to pressurise the people to accept Islam. When the Sayyid suggested to the Sultān to mould the administration in accordance with the *Shari'ah* laws, the Sultān expressed reservations pleading that it would not be politically expedient as it would earn the enmity of his nobles (*arkān-i-muluk*), the majority of whom were non-Muslims.[200] The Sayyid was so much disgusted with this response that he left the Valley with a note of displeasure.[201] It is worth noting that while, according to the Persian chronicles, hagiographic literature and the folk tradition, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī was the most outstanding saint of Kashmir to have won mass conversion, Jonarāja has observed complete silence over the momentous event of Sayyid 'Ali's arrival and his activities, obviously because it was consistent with the policy of the Sanskrit chroniclers to omit the mention of voluntary conversions and of such preachers who won conversions by persuasive means.

The reign of Sultān Sikandar (1389-1413) has occasioned a hot debate among the historians – some accepting the contemporary evidence of his supposed "iconoclasm" at its face value and some subjecting it to historical scrutiny. A section of the Pandit scholars not only accepted the evidence literally, but they sensitised and sensationalised it more by adding fabricated details to what was already hammed up by the contemporaries. Acknowledging the degree to which present concerns have shaped the historical perception of Kashmiri Pandits, Henny Sender remarks:

> The reign of Sikandar is ... a crucial period in the history and mythology of the Kashmiri Brahmans; not only for what actually transpired, but for what is 'remembered'. Memories of forced conversion, perilous flight and long exile have etched themselves on the collective consciousness of the community and have exercised influence on choices the Pandits were asked to make in later years.[202]

Anand Koul, in his usual fashion, gives a melodramatic portrayal of the forced conversions and the *brāhmanas*' resistance:

> Sikandar, the iconoclast and 'Ali Shāh... excelled Dulch (Zulju, the Mongol invader who invaded Kashmir in A.D. 1320) in their zeal to

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199 Ibid., p.58

200 Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5b.

201 *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 257; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 11b.

202 Henny Sender, p.14.

> make converts to Muhammedanism and again the cry *na Bhatta ham* went forth... The Brahmins were firm in strictly keeping their caste. Death's dark vale had absolutely no terror to them. There remained only eleven families, all others either having been converted or having fled the country.[203]

In his review of Sikandar's reign Walter Lawrence, true to his ilk, not only conveys but also dramatises what was 'remembered' rather than what had occurred:

> Having glutted his vengeance on Hindu temples, Sikandar turned his attention to the people who had worshipped in them and he offered them three choices, death, conversion or exile. Many fled, many were converted and many were killed.[204]

The legend of the survival of 'eleven families' passed into history. Haig perpetuated the legend through his article *Chronology and Genealogy of the Muhammaden Kings of Kashmir.*[205] The *Cambridge History of India* also repeated it.[206] The 'eleven families' also became a 'code word' of the Kashmiri Pandits living in the plains; and they used the legend frequently in their community magazines either for proving their credentials as 'pukka' *brāhmanas* or to educate the members of their community about their roots at a time of growing uncertainty or to defend their communal identity at a time of increased polarization.[207]

While a section of the historians and non- historians left no stone unturned to project Sultān Sikandar as a fanatic ruler, the dispassionate studies, however, tried to take the edge off the communal historiography by subjecting the contemporary evidence and 'representation' of reality to processing process. Following this approach, let us first see what the contemporary sources say about Sultān Sikandar's religious policy and how far it is correct to accept the evidence, as it has come down to us, at its face value.

Needless to say, we have two contemporary/near contemporary 'representations' of what occurred during the reign of Sultān Sikandar– one represents the *brāhmana* position and the other the fanatic view of a section of Muslims.The *brāhmana* viewpoint is represented by Jonarāja, the contemporary chronicler, and the Muslim zealots' view by

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[203] Koul, p.49.

[204] Walter Lawrence, op. cit., p. 191.

[205] W. Haig, "Chronology and Genealogy of the Muhammadan Kings of Kashmir". *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. xv, 1918.

[206] W.Haig (ed.), *Cambridge History of India*, vol. iii, p. 281.

[207] Henny Sender, p. 16.

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the Persian sources, written not less than three hundred years after Sultān Sikandar.

It may, however, be mentioned at the very outset that while both the categories of sources refer to the razing down of temples during his reign none mentions that the Hindus were given the options of "death, conversion or exile" as the tradition makes us believe; nor is there any mention of only "eleven families of *brāhmanas*" surviving the 'forced conversions'. These are the myths which were woven to alter the history to meet the community demands. To put the records straight, we quote Jonarāja verbatim with regard to the ' forcible imposition of Islam' during the Sultān's reign:

> Suhabhatta who disregarded the acts enjoined by the Vedas, and was instructed by the mlecchas, instigated the king to break down the images of gods. The good fortune of the subjects left them, and so the king forgot his kingly duties and took a delight, day and night, in breaking images... There was no city, no town, no village, no wood where Suha the Turushka left the temples of gods unbroken. Of the images which once had existed, the name alone was left; and Suhabhatta then felt the satisfaction which one feels on recovering from illness. Suhabhatta with the leaders of the army tried to destroy the castes of the people... The Brahmans declared that they would die if they lost their castes and Suhabhatta subjected them to a heavy fine because they held to their caste. At the time when his dependants who belonged to the Brāhmana and other castes forsook their caste, ambitious to obtain the favour of the king, Shri Simha and Bhattakasthuta, two merchants, became worthy of praise, and Shri Nirmmalacharyyavaryya deserved praise in the three worlds... by not accepting the king's favour to pollute his own caste. It is an established rule, that the master is responsible for the fault of his servant, and, therefore, for the fault of Suhabhatta Death became angry with the king. Having coronated his eldest son, king Shekandhara [Sikandar] died on the eight lunar day of Jaishtha, in the year 89.[208]

The following points emerge from the above account given by the poet-chronicler:

1. Suhabhatta (the neo-convert Prime Minister of Sultān Sikandar who embraced Islam at the hands of Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī) is squarely held responsible for influencing the mind of the Sultān in favour of the forcible imposition of Islam.

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208 Jonarāja, pp. 59-61.

2. Suhabhatta received the support of the "leaders of the army" in his actions.
3. Suhabhatta asked the *brāhmanas* either to accept Islam or pay a " heavy fine".
4. The *brāhmanas* in general agreed to pay 'fine' rather than to embrace Islam.
5. Many *brāhmanas* and other castes embraced Islam "ambitious to obtain the favour of the king".
6. Many *brāhmanas* and others stuck to their religion resisting the temptation of favours promised.
7. Suhabhatta destroyed "all the temples of the gods".

Thus the most significant point that is emphasised by Jonarāja is that the neo-converts were in the vanguard of the 'forcible imposition of Islam'. These neo-converts were not the ordinary people, but comprised the hereditary land-owning aristocracy who ruled the different parts of the Valley and formed the nobility of the period. Besides Suhabhatta who was the Prime Minister of the Sultān, we also hear of 'leaders of the army' joining hands with Suhabhatta. These 'leaders of the army' were the heads of the dominant landlord tribes, namely, Lavanyas, Tantrians, Rainas, Māgreys, Dārs, Bhats, Nāyaks, etc., whom Kalhana calls by the generic term *dāmaras*.[209] They were so powerful that no ruler could afford to reign without enjoying the support of, at least, the majority of these tribes. And no wonder that the history of Kashmir from the eighth-ninth century onwards reeled under the political chaos created by them, leading to quick enthronement and dethronement of rulers.[210] Suhabhatta as well as these 'leaders of the army' did not belong to the *brāhmana* caste;[211] and as the *brāhmanas* had arrogated a superior position to themselves by claiming Aryan identity[212] and were using religion and religious institutions to pressurise the rulers to subordinate the state to their personal interests[213] two powerful but mutually antagonistic groups were created – *brāhmanas* on the one hand and hereditary land-owning tribes on the other. The resistance of *dāmaras* (hereditary land-owning tribes) against the *brāhmanas'* insatiable lust to control more and more lands led to a deep-seated

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[209] For details, see M.A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, vol. II, pp. 304-308.

[210] *Rājataranginī*, Book vii and Book viii.

[211] Jonarāja, p.66.

[212] *Rājataranginī*, i. 307, 312-16.

[213] For details see infra, pp.176-78.

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antagonism between the two. The former used their military might and the latter their control over religious institutions and social influence as 'gods of the earth' to see each other down.[214] As a matter of fact, the tussle between the *dāmaras* and the *brāhmanas* features as one of the noteworthy subjects which Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* deals with.[215] And as these hereditary land-owning tribes did not belong to any superior caste, it is understandable why the *brāhmanas* call them by a derogatory term, *dasyu* (robbers).[216] Suhabhatta, too, did not belong to the *brāhmana* caste.[217] Perhaps he represents the deep antipathy of the ruling class, who belonged to the lower castes, against the Brāhmanical social and religious order, if not with the *brāhmanas* as persons. That he was not a *brāhmana* and that he got thoroughly re-oriented after conversion to Islam, turning out to be an uncompromising zealot who along with the 'leaders of the army' forced Sikandar to change his predecessors' policy of non-interference in religious matters, can be seen clearly in the following statement of Jonarāja which he makes in the context of Suhabhatta's anti-Brāhamanical role during the period of Sikandar's son and successor, 'Ali Shāh:

> It was out of his devotion to the religion of the Turushkas, not out of antipathy towards the twice-born, that he oppressed the Brahmans; and hence his victims did not much complain. This was what Suhabhatta told them in order to remove the impression which his actions created that he had antipathy towards the Brahmans.[218]

Thus the turn of the events during the reign of Sultān Sikandar, marked by the 'forcible imposition of Islam', was the result of the pressure exerted by the neo-convert *dāmaras* and councillors upon the Sultān to change the erstwhile policy of his forefathers. The want of majority support of nobles to enforce Islam during the time of Sikandar's father, Sultān Qutub al-Dīn, even if it was desired by no less a saint than Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, was not only overcome with the conversion of the majority of the *umarā* (by the Sayyid's disciples particularly by his son during the reign of Sultān Sikandar) but now the nobility became the *ghāzis* of Islam and, in the words of Jonarāja, "instigated the king to break the images of gods" and asked the *brāhmanas* to either accept Islam or pay 'fine'. Given the fact that the

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[214] Ibid

[215] Ibid,

[216] *Rājataranginī*, viii. 6, 7, 14, 39, 856, 968, 1057.

[217] Jonarāja, p. 66.

[218] Ibid., p. 67.

Kashmiri society was mainly dominated by the land-owning tribes and that the majority of the population belonged to the different economic strata of these tribes, as is evident by the present *krām* composition of Kashmiri society,[219] and that the outcastes were rejected by the Brāhmanical religion as 'impure',[220] the term 'forcible imposition of Islam' by the Sultān at the 'instigation' of the *dāmaras* and nobles applies only to a small section of the *brāhmana* caste, and that too to only those who maintained their religious identity, as we find many of the *brāhmanas* also embracing Islam voluntarily.[221] Thus to a majority of the people the enforcement of new religious order was not a 'forcible imposition of Islam' popularly so called. Conversely, it was a turn over of public opinion -- a turn over to serve their turn.

Secondly, Jonarāja, despite having hammed up religious intolerance of Suhabhatta, does not say, not in the slightest, that the *brāhmanas* were given three choices, "death, conversion or exile". He only says that the *brāhmanas* were asked either to accept Islam or pay 'fine' (*jiziya*); and the *brāhmanas* preferred to pay *jiziya* rather than "pollute their caste". However, Jonarāja contradicts himself regarding the imposition of *jiziya* during the reign of Sikandar. While narrating Suhabhatta's role during the reign of Sultān 'Alī Shāh, he clearly mentions that notwithstanding Suhabatta's insistence on imposing *jiziya* upon the *brāhmanas*, Sultān Sikandar refused to agree upon the proposal; and it was only when Suhabhatta became all-powerful during the reign of 'Ali Shāh that he succeeded in implementing his policy:

> Though the king Shri Shikandhara [Sikandar] was often instigated by Suha to persecute the twice-born, he, whose purpose was tempered by kindness, fixed with some difficulty, a limit to the great sea of the *Yavanas*. But Suha passed the limit by levying fines on the twice-born.[222]

That, according to Jonarāja, *brāhmanas* in general offered strong resistance against the pressures exerted upon them by Suhabhatta and firmly stuck to their religion, even though some leaders of the community were offered favours, refutes the legend of the survival of eleven families perpetuated by a section of the Pandit elite orally as well as in writing. It may be mentioned that as late as the beginning of the sixteenth century we hear of about six hundred *brāhmana* leaders, each having control over about one hundred families.[223] That these *brāhmana* leaders headed at least one hundred families each points to the existence of not less than six hundred *brāhmana gotras* (tribal divisions) as late as the sixteenth century.

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[219] The majority of Kashmiri Muslims belong to the traditional powerful tribes of Kashmir, namely, Bhat, Tantray, (ancient Tantrians) Magrey (ancient Margesha), Lone (ancient Lavanyas), Thakur (ancient Thakuras), Nayak (ancient Nayaka), Rather (ancient Rathore), Dār (ancient Dāmara).

[220] *Rājatarangini*, v. 400-402.

[221] Jonarāja, p. 60; Śuka, p. 420.

[222] Ibid., p. 65.

Although Jonarāja mainly talks of 'forcible imposition of Islam,' he does not hide the fact that those who offered to pay the *jiziya* were not pressed to embrace Islam albeit, as mentioned above *jiziya* was never realised during the reign of Sultān Sikandar. In fact, the freedom to retain one's religion was not interfered with; and those leaders who according to Jonarāja held important positions or were offered favours to embrace Islam boldly refused to change their faith. However, the poet-chronicler and the stubborn *brāhmana* acknowledges, though with a note of underestimation, the incidents of voluntary conversions by saying that many "*brāhmana* and other castes forsook their caste, ambitious to obtain the favour of the king." Yet, he discreetly observes silence over the conversions won by the preachers through preachings and teachings. Simple mention of the conversions through persuasive preachings, precept and example would have amounted to an indirect recognition of Islam's and Sūfīs' superiority over Brāhmanical religion and its propagators. The *brāhmana* chronicler seems to have been well conscious of this fact and, therefore, preferred to harp only on force or economic motivations behind the conversions.

So far as Jonarāja's poetic description of the wholesale destruction of the temples is concerned, he acts as a slavish imitator of his illustrious predecessor, Kalhana. Regarding the desecration of temples by the eleventh century Hindu *rājā*, Harsa, Kalhana says, "There was not one temple in a village, town or in the city which was not spoiled of its image by that Turuska, King Harsa."[224]. Exactly the same diction and substance is being repeated by Jonarāja. He only changes the name of Harsa by Śuha : "There was no city, no town, no village, no wood, where Śuha the Turushka left the temples of gods unbroken." Doubtless, Jonarāja has exaggerated the iconoclastic activities of Suhabhatta. If we accept the statement of Jonarāja at its face value, then not a single temple should have existed in Kashmir after their alleged wholesale destruction. But we are fortunate in having detailed information about the existence of a large number of temples in Kashmir, recorded in the chronicles written not earlier than one hundred years after Jonarāja. Mirzā Haidar Dughlat who ruled Kashmir for about eleven years (1540-1551) not only mentions the existence of more than 150 prominent temples, but he regards them as the "first and foremost wonders of Kashmir." What is equally significant to note from his description of these temples is that he gives minute details of their architectural features from basement to roof including enclosures, pointing out unambiguously that these temples were completely intact in their original position in the second half of the 16th century. It is rewarding to quote Haidar Dughlat verbatim as it helps us in rescuing Kashmir history from the contemporaneous as well as the current distortions:

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[223] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 59. According to Anand Kaul the Kashmirī *brāhmanas* are divided into one hundred and ninety-nine *gotras*. (Kaul, p.19). Making allowance for the exaggerated account of the *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, still the number of *gotras* (tribes) among Kashmiri *brāhmanas* could not have been less than one hundred and ninety-nine, the number which existed even as late as the beginning of the twentieth century – the time when Kaul wrote his *The Kashmiri Pandit*.

[224] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 1095.

> First and foremost among the wonders of Kashmir stand her idol temples. In and around Kashmir, there are more than one hundred and fifty temples which are built of blocks of hewn stone, fitted so accurately one upon the other, that there is absolutely no cement used. These stones have been so carefully placed in position, without plaster or mortar, that a sheet of paper could not be passed between the joints. The blocks are from three to twenty gaz in length, one gaz in depth, and one to five gaz in breadth. The marvel is how these stones were transported and erected. The temples are nearly all built on the same plan. There is a square enclosure which in some places reaches the height of thirty gaz, while each side is about three hundred gaz long. Inside this enclosure there are pillars, and on the top of the pillars there are square capitals; on the top of these again, are placed supports, and most of these separate parts are made out of one block of stone. On the pillars are fixed the supports of the arches, and each arch is three or four gaz in width. Under the arch are a hall and a doorway. On the outside and inside of the arch are pillars of forty or fifty gaz in height, having supports and capitals of one block of stone. On the top of this are placed four pillars of one or two pieces of stone.
>
> The inside and the outside of the halls have the appearance of two porticoes, and these are covered with one or two stones. The capitals, the ornamentation in relief, the cornices, the 'dog tooth' work, the inside covering and the outside, are all crowded with pictures and paintings, which I am incapable of describing. Some

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> represent laughing and weeping figures, which astound the beholder. In the middle is a lofty throne of hewn stone, and over that, a dome made entirely of stone, which I cannot describe. In the rest of the world there is not to be seen, or heard of, one building like this. How wonderful that there should [here] be a hundred and fifty of them.[225]

The existence of temples belonging to the Hindu *rājās* of Kashmir is further substantiated by Abu'l Fazl[226] and Jahangir. Jahangir, who visited Kashmir many a time, records in his *Tuzuk*: "The lofty idol temples which were built before the manifestation of Islam, are still in existence, and are all built of stones, which from foundation to roof are large, and weigh 30 or 40 maunds, placed one on the other".[227]

It is interesting to note that although Mirzā Haidar records the existence of at least 150 prominent temples in Kashmir (which he obviously got counted during his rule),and even if he personally visited many temples and noted on the spot their architectural details, he, too was, however, enthralled by the contemporary fashion of hamming up Sultān Sikandar as a *butshikan*(idol breaker) for having "destroyed all idol temples".[228] Overwhelmed by the misplaced enthusiasm of the time, he forgot that this reckless statement contradicted his own-recorded details about the existence of 150 temples. True, the Persian chroniclers played no less a role in perpetuating the myth of wholesale destruction of temples. Yet there is a noticeable difference between the statements of Jonarāja and the Persian chroniclers. While the former attributes it to Suhabhatta, the latter give the 'credit' for it to either Sultān Sikandar or Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī.[229] The Persian chroniclers' predilection for Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī and Sultān Sikandar are not difficult to seek. Given their Persianate background and relations with the Sayyid it was consistent with the demands of their own milieu to project either Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī or Sultān Sikandar as a *ghāzi*; and not in any case the neo-converts as it would overshadow the contribution of the Sayyids and *mourusi* Muslims (Muslims with a long Islamic background).

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[225] Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, p.426. G. M. D. Sūfī captures the popular, but purposely tutored, historical perception in Kashmir saying. "Anyone who visits old or ruined temples anywhere in India is told by the guide or the priests that the idols therein were broken by Aurangzeb; similarly anyone who visits such places up the Jhelum is summarily informed that the havoc to the gods was wrought by Sikandar". G.M. D. Sūfī, *Islamic Culture*, p. 43.

[226] *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* (tr. Jarrett), vol. III, p.358.

[227] *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, II, p .150.

[228] *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, p.433.

[229] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 136; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff.26a-b

As a matter of fact, both the Sanskrit and Persian chroniclers had their own compulsions in magnifying the supposed iconoclastic activities under reference. Apart from trying to show the 'forced imposition of Islam and *brāhmana* resistance', Jonarāja had an official compulsion in portraying Suhabhatta as a thorough vandal and heartless fellow. As we know, Jonarāja was the court chronicler of Sultān Zain al- 'Ābidīn and the latter was at daggers drawn with Suhabhatta.[230] When Shāhī Khān (Zain al- 'Ābidīn) was the crown prince during the reign of his brother 'Ali Shāh, Suhabhatta had monopolised the whole power and was acting as a dictator much to the resentment of the young prince.[231] Besides, he had with a calculated move ignored the crown prince (Shāhī Khān) and in his place patronised his own relations and favourities.[232] This attitude naturally mauled Shāhī Khān (future Zain al- 'Ābidīn)[233] and he never forgave him though Suhabhatta's masterful position lasted only for three to four years.[234] The inveterate enmity which Zain al- 'Ābidīn bore against Suhabhatta passed into history through his official historian, Jonarāja, who dipped his pen deep to portray his patron's enemy as a ruthless vandal to drag his name through the mire. ~~It is, therefore,~~ necessary that we should first study Jonarāja before studying his facts, ~~especially~~ when he is not only our main authority but also the source of ~~almost~~ all the Persian chronicles – both local and non-local–regarding the "iconoclastic activities" during the reign of Sultān Sikandar.

It may, however, appear strange, but it is not fortuitous that while the Persian chroniclers accepted the version of Jonarāja with regard to the demolition of temples during the reign of Sikandar, they deliberately omitted a significant information furnished by the Sanskrit chronicler. Jonarāja says that while the neo-convert land-owning tribal heads and nobles led by Suhahbatta were restrained by Sikander from crossing the limits, they were let loose after his death when Suhahbhatta became the *defacto* ruler, reducing 'Ali Shāh and the heir apparent, Shāhī Khān, as non-entities. It should be remembered that during the first four years of 'Ali Shāh's reign (when according to Jonarāja

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[230] Jonarāja, pp. 65, 68.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Ibid.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid.

Suhabhatta persecuted *brāhmanas)*, Suhahbhatta was the real master of the land. This is evidenced from a quote by the Sanskrit chronicler:

> As in the evening, which darkens the mountains, neither the sun nor the moon is visible, so when Suhabhatta..... became powerful neither the king ['Ali Shāh] nor the heir apparent [Shāhī Khān] could raise his head.[235]

He further says:

> The ministers attained or lost rank and honour according to the will of the powerful Suhahbhatta, even as the duration of the seasons laden with fruits is under the control of the sun. When Shāhī Khan saw the wisdom and power centred in one person, he became alarmed and anxious, and did not sleep.[236]

It is after mentioning the masterful position assumed by Suhabhatta during the reign of 'Ali Shāh that Jonarāja describes the limits crossed by this neo-convert powerful man. As the Persian chroniclers and later historians have attributed to the reign of Sikandar what actually happened during the time of 'Ali Shāh when Suhabhatta was the real ruler, it is important to quote Jonarāja extensively, as being the only extant contemporary chronicler his sequence of events can not be doubted, nor perhaps the substance of his statement save exaggerations:

> when Suhabhatta ... became powerful neither the king ['Ali Shāh] nor the heir apparent [Shāhī Khān] could raise his head. The hawk kills other birds, the lion destroys other animals, the vijra-Jewel pierces other Jewels and the brilliant sun throws about the planets like flowers, and thus destruction seems ever to be caused in this world by one's own people. Though the king Shri Shikandhara [Sultān Sikandar] was often instigated by Suha to persecute the twice-born, he, whose purpose was tempered by kindness, fixed with some difficulty to the advance of the great sea of the Yavanas. But Suha passed the limit by levying fines on the twice-born. As the night prevents people from seeing anything but darkness, so the evil-minded man forbade ceremonies and processions during the new moon. He became envious and apprehended that the twice-born who had become fearless would keep up their caste by going to foreign countries; he, therefore, ordered all the guards on the roads not to allow passage to anyone without a written passport. Then as the fisherman torments fish in an enclosed river, so this low-born man tormented the twice-born in the country. The Brāhmanas burnt

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[235] Ibid., p. 65.

[236] Ibid., p. 68.

> themselves in the flaming fire through fear of committing sin and though fear of him who was like the heat of the fire; and thus they escaped. Struck by fear some Brāhmanas killed themselves by means of poison, some by the rope, others by drowning themselves in water, others again by falling from a precipice, and others burnt themselves... This wicked man disliked the weight of the kingdom which was hard to be borne, but he delighted in the cries of the twice-born which gave him pleasure. A multitude of Brāhmanas who prided on their caste fled from the country through bye-roads, as the main roads were closed... Even as men depart from this world, so did the Brāhmanas flee to foreign countries, the son leaving his father behind and the father leaving his son to the Death-like Suha who sorrowed at the escape of Brāhmanas... Some twice-born men who were anxious to save their wives, emaciated by want of food, did not depart to foreign countries, but wandered about in Kashmira wearing the dress of the mlecchas. Suha withheld the allowances of the twice-born with a view to extinguish learning... It was out of his devotion to the religion of the Turushkas... that he oppressed the Brāhmanas... The Brāhmanas, the supporters of the world,had taken refuge of Ratnakara in order to preserve their party, ~~and this~~ little Brāhmana became the favourite of Suhabhatta... Suhabhatta spent three or four years oppressing the twice-born,reviling the Sastras, thinking of rebellion and undergoing medical treatment for his disease... [which] whithered him up."[237]

The above detailed account given by the contemporary chronicler regarding the persecutionary policy of Suhabhatta throws up a very significant point viz., that the only section of society that became the victim of Suha's policy was the *brāhmanas* as Jonarāja refers to no other save the twice-born having been oppressed by Suhabhatta. This shows that all the non-*brāhmanas* had perhaps already embraced Islam voluntarily. Had Suhabhatta not enjoyed the whole-hearted support of the *dāmaras* and the masses, it would not have been possible for him to displease this most influential section, to say least of subjecting them to persecution. To be sure, the 'forced imposition of Islam' was the handiwork of the mass-based indigenous ruling elite who gave vent to their deep antipathy against the *brāhmanas* once they had assumed power. Thus the use of state power during their ascendancy was actually the turn over of popular opinion led by low-caste *dāmaras*, nobles and even what Suka says 'low *brāhmanas*'[238] against the *brāhmanas* who treated all others with contempt besides pressurising the state to enforce *varna* system with *danda*[239] and to clip the wings of *dāmaras* by using all possible persecutionary means.[240] Since the position of the *brāhmanas* rested on Brāhmanical religion and its institutions, the *non-brāhmanas* challenged their very basis by becoming the champions of the counter religion.

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[237] Ibid., pp. 65-68.

[238] Śuka, p. 420.

Another noteworthy point made by Jonarāja is that no *brāhmana* embraced Islam under duress, instead they put a heroic resistance against it. According to the chronicler the *brāhmanas* preferred to kill themselves or to leave the Valley or die of hunger rather than to succumb to any pressure exerted by Suhabhatta. However, if any *brāhmana* like Ratnakara embraced Islam he did it voluntarily. Given what Jonarāja says, pressure was exerted only on *brāhmanas* and none of them buckled before it. Thus the contemporary chronicler rules out conversion under force. Still, if we for the sake of argument presume that some *brāhmanas* might have accepted Islam under duress, we have, however, not to forget that just three years after their 'conversion' these 'converts' got a long period of half a century rule of complete freedom to revert to their own faith. This was the period of the celebrated ruler of Kashmir, Zain al- 'Ābidīn, who ruled from 1420 to 1470. According to ~~Jonarāja, Suba~~bhatta could not survive for more than four years after 'Ali Shāh's accession to the throne.[241] 'Ali Shāh assumed power in 1413 and ruled upto the beginning of 1420, i.e for seven years only. Suhabhatta according to Jonarāja, died between 1416-17.[242] Thus just after three years of Suha's death Zain al- 'Ābidīn ascended the throne of Kashmir and with this began such an era of religious freedom in Kashmir that according to Jonarāja he performed, " What was beyond the power of the past sovereigns and what will be beyond the ability of future kings".[243] This is not an exaggeration if we consider that, regardless of the *Sharī'ah* bindings, he issued an order allowing all those who had embraced Islam under any pressure to return to their original faith if they so wished.[244] He also called back all those *brāhmanas* who had left Kashmir and assured them full state protection and patronage.[245] He patronised the talent and learning without any religious bias.[246] According to Jonarāja, "The king looked with equal eyes upon his own as upon others. As traders do not allow any inequality in their scales so the king did not brook inequality."[247] He constructed and repaired temples and *mathas* and endowed lavish rent-free land revenue grants to the *brāhmanas* and their institutions.[248] He also fashioned himself into a figure with which Hindus could identify him as their own. His two court historians, Jonarāja and Śrivara, give an exhaustive account of the long journeys undertaken by the Sultān to go on pilgrimages to the Hindu shrines.[249] No less worth noting is the Sultān's participation in Hindu festivals and his personal care to provide gifts to the *brāhmana* priests and necessary provisions to the devotees (even wine) for performing religious rituals[250]. They also refer to the Sultān's interest in Hindu religious scriptures which were read out to him by his court historians, scholars and poets.[251] According to Jonarāja and Nizām al- Dīn Ahmad, the Sultān did not eat meat in certain months and forbade hunting.[252] Given the patronage which Hinduism and the *brāhmanas* received from Zain al- 'Ābidīn, it is no wonder to see the Sanskrit chroniclers elevating him to the status of the incarnation of Viśnu.[253]

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[239] V.N. Drabu, *Kashmir Polity*, pp. 60-61.

[240] *Rājataranginī*, viii 2730-2739.

[241] Jonarāja, p.68.

[242] Ibid.

[243] Ibid., p.90.

[244] Nizām al-Dīn Ahmad, *Tabaqāt-i Akbarī* (tr.De), vol. III, p.655.

[245] Jonarāja (Bo.ed) sl. 1048). Vide, N.K Zutshi, *Sultān Zain-ul-Abidin of Kashmir*, p.69.

Despite the freedom of re-conversion given by Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn, we do not come across any instance of re-conversion, neither in the works of his court historians nor in any other Persian chronicle save in *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*[254] written by a fanatical Shi'i to extol the position of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī (the founder of Shi'ism in Kashmir) as an extirpator of *kufur*. It is naive to believe that the court chroniclers of Zain al- 'Ābidīn would have missed a significant development like re-conversions to Hinduism when we see them recording minute details of their patron's reign, especially his treatment towards *brāhmanas* and the Brahmanic religion. Also, such a development would have reinforced the Sanskrit chroniclers' implicit theory of 'forced conversions' during the reign of Sikandar and 'Alī Shāh. The author of *Bahāristān- Shāhī*, who represents the religious fanaticism of a section of Muslims of the period and is, therefore, critical of the religious liberties granted by Sultān Zain al- 'Ābidīn to *brāhmanas*,[255] also does not mention any re-conversion during the reign of the Sultān. *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb* is neither supported by the contemporary Sanskrit chronicler, Śuka, nor even by the author of *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* in saying that during the Prime Ministership of Mūsā Raina (early 16th century) Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī reconverted by force all those *brāhmanas* to Islam who had re-embraced their original faith during the reign of Zain al- 'Ābidīn.[256] Surely, both Śuka and the author of *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* refer to conversions but none of them corroborates the version given by *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*. Neither is there any mention of reconverts having been converted again nor is there any mention of persecution. Both agree on persuasive rather than persecutionary background of these conversions. To quote Śuka:

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[246] Jonarāja, pp. 77,82,83, 97; Śrivara, p. 136.

[247] Ibid., p.77.

[248] Jonarāja, p. 87-89; Śrivara, p. 142; *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 226-27.

[249] Śrivara, pp. 146–47.

[250] Ibid., pp. 123-24.

[251] Jonarāja, p.91; Śrivara, p.145-47.

[252] Jonarāja, p. 95; Nizām al-Dīn Ahmad, op. cit., p.655.

[253] Śrivara, p. 148.

[254] *Tuhfat al Ahbāb*, p. 210-222.

> Surely the Brāhmanas at this time did not do the duties of their castes and Soma Chandra [Mūsā Raina] was the person to induce them to disregard the performance of their duties. Mera Shāh [Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī], the pupil of Shāh Kasima [Shāh Qāsim] was born in the country of Iraqa [Iraq]; he knew all the sciences and became Soma Chandra's [Mūsā Raina's] guru without giving him religious instructions.[257]

Writing though in a hyperbolic language, *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* refers to bestowing of *in'ām wa ikrām* (gifts and rewards) on converts won by Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī with the co-operation of Mūsā Raina,[258] pointing to the material background of the conversions. Undoubtedly, Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī who arrived in Kashmir towards the beginning of the 16th century was a zealot who believed in the policy of imposed Islamization,[259] but he faced, as we shall see in the following pages, resistance from the *brāhmanas* as well as from the Sultāns so much so that he had no other alternative but to win people through inspiration rather than persecution. The *brāhmana* resistance against imposed Islamization is understandable if we consider that, barring a very brief spell of Suhabhatta's ascendancy, the Sultāns did not interfere with their privileged position as rent-free land grantees. Moreover, immediately after Suha's death they received equal encouragement and patronage from the state for half a century, making them a power to reckon with. They are seen taking part in politics and participating in revolts against Sultān Haidar Shāh, the son and successor of Zain al-ʻĀbidīn,[260] leading to the capital punishment of many of their leaders along with the other political adversaries of the Sultān, namely, Thakkuras.[261] The treatment to their leaders caused such a commotion among the *brāhmanas* that they caused damage to the *Khānaqāh-i-Mu'alla* and harassed the Muslims of the city. The incident was so grave that Śrivara, notwithstanding his bias in favour of his community, had to accept that the Hindus were 'guilty of severities':

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[255] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.27ab.

[256] *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, p. 210-222.

[257] Śuka, p. 339.

[258] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 43b

[259] See *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, *passim*.

> In the meantime the Hindus excited to anger by Purna, the barber [a close confidant of Haidar Shāh and the one who was responsible for capitally punishing the political opponents of Sultān Haidar Shāh], were guilty of severities on Saidakhanagaha [Khānaqāh-i Mu'alla] and others who were residing in the town.[262]

The *brāhmanas* had asserted themselves to such an extent that they attacked Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī and his party with bows, arrows and swords and injured many of them, when Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī objected to holding a religious festival where according to *Tuhfat al Ahbāb* participants indulged in sensual pleasures.[263] It was with great difficulty that Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī and his associates saved their lives by running helter skelter from the scene and hiding themselves at safer places.[264] This is an event of considerable significance considering that it happened during the Prime Ministership of Mūsā Raina who was the *murīd-i khās* of Mīr 'Irāqī.[265] The acme of the *brāhmana* assertion can be seen in their bold attempt to launch a re-conversion movement headed by Nirmmalakanthabhatta,[266] which succeeded in reconverting many neo-converts who had, as mentioned earlier, embraced Islam at the hands of Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī.[267] This provoked a strong reaction among a section of Muslims led by Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī. But the Sultāns were so indifferent to such matters that had the

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260 Śrivara, p. 187-88.

261 Ibid.

262 Ibid., p. 195

263 *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 181-186.

264 Ibid.

265 Ibid; That Mūsā Raina was a committed disciple of Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, see Ibid., pp. 29-37.

266 Śuka, p. 353; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff.43ab. While the author of *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* gives details of the re-conversion movement, he, however, does not refer to the names of its leaders.

267 Ibid.

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leaders of re-conversion movement not resorted to a grave sacrilegious act,[268] Shamas al- Dīn would not have been able to puncture this movement. The sacrilegious act committed by the reconverts at the instance of the leaders of re-conversion movement provoked such a reaction that Kājī Chak, the *defacto* ruler under Sultān Muhammad Shāh (1517-28), was forced to punish some leaders with death penalty.[269] The detailed account of this incident has been given by *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*[270] However, both *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* and *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb* have indulged in wild exaggerations to extol the position of their *pīr* as a *ghāzī* next to none. Yet, from the following account given by Śuka, the contemporary chronicler, there remains no doubt that some leaders of the re-conversion movement faced capital punishment though the chronicler leaves out the actual cause behind this action:

> Now in times gone by Shiryya [Shri Bhat] a twice-born had planted... as it were the creeper of his karma. On the approach of winter... it was watered by the good Brāhmana Shri Nirmmalakantha. Then at the time of mleccha oppression, Kanthabhatta and others held a council and was able to avert the disgrace which oppression begot. Khvājamerahmada [Mīr Shamas al Dīn], on the other hand, by devoting his life to the service of Kacha Chakra [Kājī Chak] and by giving him wealth, induced him, who was alarmed at the work of Nirmmalakantha and others, to give him permission to act against them; and actuated by the mlecchas, caused them to be murdered.[271]

Śuka's information, though written in guarded words, substantiates *Bahāristān-i Shāhi's* statement regarding the re-conversion movement launched by some *brāhmana* leaders. However, he deliberately suppresses the sacrilegious acts committed under the directions of the leaders of the movement which accounted for the capital punishment of some of them. This omission is deliberate as it saves the leaders from the charge of committing severities.

After having almost exhausted his whole vocabulary in projecting his father's *murshid* as an unmatched *ghāzī*, a truth, however, slips from the pen of the author of *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb* when he says that Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī used force in converting only those who were reconverted by the re-conversion movement, but did not touch those who or whose fathers were never converted.[272]

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[268] Ibid.

[269] Śuka, p. 353; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 43ab.

[270] Ibid.

[271] Śuka, p. 353.

دریں ولایت و مملکت هیچ کس از کفار و اهل زنار بے کلمه و بے ختنه نمانده الا

جماعتے اند کہ ایشان و پدران ایشان ــــ مسلمان نه شده بودند ... وچون ایشان

نام مسلمانی خود و پدران خود اثبات نمودند و حکام ایشان را تکلیف اسلام اکراها نه نمودند

ایشان را بحال خود گزاشته ـ

Clearly, there was a misplaced race among different Persian chroniclers belonging to different sects to represent their heroes as peerless iconoclasts to extol their positions in the eyes of posterity. This can be gauged by the fact that while the Shi'i chroniclers and hagiographers give an unmatched portrayal of Shamas al-Dīn as a destroyer of infidelity, the Sunni chroniclers and hagiographers omit his name completely from the list of the missionaries of Islam; instead, they are down on him for having introduced schism among Muslims.[273]

On the whole, the Sultāns, who succeeded Zain al- 'Ābidīn, maintained the latter's policy of non-interference in religious affairs and like him treated their subjects almost on an equal footing. Sultān Haidar Shāh, the son and successor of Zain al- 'Ābidīn, was simply interested in wine and music. To quote the contemporary chronicler and court musician of Haidar Shāh, Śrivara:

> In this reign [the reign of Haidar Shāh] owing to the prevalence of drunkenness, wine came to be prepared from molasses as from grapes, and this wine became as common here as the wine prepared from sugar in other countries. When the king became addicted to wine and averse to all other kinds of enjoyment, molasses and candies and other things prepared from the juice of sugar-cane became scarce. Malladaudaka [Mulla 'Udi] was a great master of music and his pupil Khujyabdolkadira [Khawaja 'Abd al Qādir] taught the king to play the lute. He acquired proficiency in the music of the lute and other instruments from us and he spent all his life to the music of the lute, without a moment's intermission. The king understood the art of playing on the lute and was skilled in it, so that he gave lessons even to the professors. Vahalala and others played on the ravava [rabāb] and what did they not earn thereby through the favour of the king who showered gold on them.[274]

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[272] *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, p. 222.

[273] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 21b-25a; *Waqi'at-i Kashmir*, p. 140.

[274] Śrivara, pp. 188-89.

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About the patronage which Sultān Hasan Shāh, the successor of Haidar Shāh, showered on Hindu religion and *brāhmanas*, Śrivara writes:

> The king. who knew all schools of philosophy and who placed his intelligence under the guidance of his minister, re-established in the kingdom the practices of the time of his grandfather [Zain al-'Ābidin]... He made a good use of his wealth by building mathas and endowing villages in favour of Brāhmanas.[275]

Like his father, Sultān Hasan Shāh was only interested in wine, women, music and dance. His court was the court of musicians, singers, dancers and jesters whom he brought from different parts of India besides attracting the native talent.[276] About Hasan Shāh's overwhelming interest in spending his time in the company of musicians and dancers and his indulgence in merry-making with them is delineated by Śrivara who, being one of his most favourite musicians and singers, headed a section of music department:

> The youthful king, on whom Royal Fortune was propitious, brought in men expert in singing and enjoyed music. Jayahangera the Margesha [Jahāngir Māgrey] and other courtiers, versed in music and accustomed to a life of pleasure, looked like stars before the moon in the presence of the king... The king was versed in Sanskrita verses, but was fond of vernacular songs... The singers from Karnata [Karnataka] sat gracefully before the king as if they represented the six tunes viz; Kedara, Gauda, Gandhara, Desha, Bhangla and Malava. The female dancers of the king shone beauteously and bright like the lamps at night, they were inflamed by the god of love and were young and full of emotion... The female dancers Ratnamala, Dipamala and Nitpamala danced charmingly displaying emotions and gestures... Thus the youthful king praised the women in presence of his boon companions, and took cups of wine from them.[277]

Muhammad Shāh and Fateh Shāh, who by turns ruled Kashmir from 1484 upto 1530,maintained the policy of their predecessors and treated their subjects with equality. Muhammad Shāh and his *wazir*, Sayyid Muhammad, did not put up with Mir Shamas al-Dīn's interference in the religious freedom of the Hindus. According to *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb* it was because of the vehment oppostion Shamas al- Dīn

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275 Ibid., pp. 209-210.

276 According to the Persian sources there were about 1200 musicians, singers and dancers in his court. *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.28a; Haidar Malik, p. 47.

277 Śrivara, pp. 230-232.

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faced from Muhammad Shāh and his Prime Minister that he got disgusted and went away to Baltistān.[278] Likewise, Fateh Shāh did not allow Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī to intervene in the religious liberties of his subjects. Once, when Shamas al-Dīn tried to put a stop to the festivities, organised by the Hindus on the day of spring festival held at Kōh-i-Mārān, on the ground that the participants were freely drinking and indulging in immoral practices, the Sultān got so angry with having learnt about Shamas al-Dīn's interference in religious freedom of the Hindus, that he would have put him to death had he not been dissuaded by his councillors.[279]

Likewise, there is absolutely not a scintilla of evidence in the sources pointing to any force employed by the rulers, who succeeded Fateh Shāh, for converting the people to Islam. Interestingly enough, if there is any evidence of religious fanaticism shown by some rulers, namely, Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, Daulat Chak and Ya'qūb Shāh Chak, it pertains to furthering their own respective schools of thought rather than to converting the people to Islam.[280] An idea about the religious freedom enjoyed by the Hindus during the Chaks and the patronage offered by the rulers for the promotion of the Hindu religion can be had from some casual references we come across, especially in the Sanskrit sources. Here is, for example, Śuka's portrayal of the role of Sultān Husain Shāh Chak in the celebrations of *Naureh*, and *Sripanchmi* festivities, and the complete freedom with which the Hindus performed their rituals including drink and dance, although the Chaks were the *murīds* (disciples)of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī who strongly abhorred these practices:

> When all the people had met at Sarikasma and the king had arrived at the hill of that place, he held a great festival Naureh on that day appointed to celebrate the season of spring. The people besmeared themselves with saffron, aloes, camphor and sandal wood paste on that day and looked beautiful. The king fixed a mark so high that it could not be easily seen, and then he gave elephant, horse and wealth to his servant who succeeded in shooting it. Again on the day of Sripanchmi, the king saw the people collect on the hill of Jayasthanudra. Some held bouquets tastefully made of beautiful flowers to their noses; some were intoxicated and became uneasy when women, strangers to them, smiled; some drank wine and

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[278] *Tufat al Ahbāb*, p. 63-64.

[279] Ibid., p. 157-60.

[280] *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 432-433; Sayyid 'Ali, f.26a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 54ab; Haidar Malik, p. 57. Also, see *KashmirUnder the Sultans*, op. cit., pp. 143-4, 147, 182.

> adorned their persons with flowers; thus all the people amused themselves on the Sripanchami day and then dispersed themselves. Many a time the king witnessed the dances of beautiful women, and looked at their youthful beauties, and heard their songs, and gave them clothes of gold and of silver.[281]

Sultān Husain Shāh Chak is also known for having divided his week to attend special business on special days. And while he used to spend Fridays with the *'ulamā'*, he kept Saturdays exclusively for discussions with the Hindu and Buddhist priests.[282]

Śuka also showers praises on 'Alī Shāh Chak, the successor of Husain Shāh. As the Sultān treated his subjects on an equal footing, Śuka lauded his just governance, saying that the people " sighted heaven" when they "saw the country of Kashmira well governed by the king ['Ali Shāh].'"[283] Yūsuf Shāh Chak, who succeeded 'Ali Shāh, is known not for any bigotry, but for his love of poetry, music and romance.[284] He abolished oppressive taxes and is also known to have abolished the *jiziya*.[285] The *jiziya* on non-Muslims and *zakāt* on Muslims, it may be mentioned, continued to form a part of the tax structure during the Chaks (except during the reign of Yūsuf Shāh) as a symbol of an Islamic state.[286] While the Muslims did not complain against the imposition of *zakāt*, the *brāhmanas* were not happy with the payment of *jiziya* though according to Śuka only the rich *brāhmanas* had to pay it and that too only 'forty panas'a year.[287] Minus the *jiziya*, this sixteenth century Sanskrit chronicler has no complaint against the Chaks. The *brāhmanas* enjoyed complete religious freedom and continued to serve in the administration and to receive land grants. Even an orthodox Shi'i, Daulat Chak, is seen paying a visit to a Hindu ascetic and seeking his advice on how to get rid of a natural calamity.[288] He even offered him village Tulmula as a rent-free land grant, though at the same time expressed his inability to abolish the *jiziya*.[289] The establishment of strong service linkages of Kashmiri Pandits with the Muslim rulers, even with the Afghāns who are portrayed as brutal fanatics by the Pandit tradition, is testified by the

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281 Śuka, p. 393.

282 Haidar Malik, p. 63

283 Śuka, p. 394.

284 Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Risāla-i Ghusliyya Yūsuf Shāhi*, f. 56; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 83a.

285 Haidar Malik, p. 74.

286 Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 214-216.

287 Śuka, p. 420.

288 Ibid., p. 382.

289 Ibid.

occupational surnames like *Muhatasib, Khazānchī, Bakhshī, Sazāwal, Dīwānī, Naqīb, Qāzī, Munshī, Razdān, Ambardār, Fōtadār, Ganju, Wāngacārī, Turuk, Durānī, Jalālī, Bāmzai*, etc.,[290] adopted by many Pandit families at the expense of their actual surnames. After having successively occupied a particular position in the state apparatus during the Muslim rule in Kashmir these families came to be popularly called after these 'nicknames' which ultimately became their surnames after the strong local tradition.[291]

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[290] For details about the surnames of Kashmiri Pandits, see Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, pp. 98-108; also see Muhammad al-Din Fouq, *Tarikh-i Aqwām-i Kashmir*, vol. I.

[291] Ibid.

4: Identifying the Roots of Conversion–II

Role of the Sūfī Missionaries

It has been acknowledged on all hands that the conversion to Islam in Kashmir was mainly the handiwork of Muslim preachers. This is not only the view of Muslim chroniclers and hagiologists of the period but even contemporary Sanskrit chroniclers support it,[1] though being the arch enemies of change, the latter have observed silence over the conversion won by the preachers without involving the state in their endeavours.[2] But not unoften their silence becomes more eloquent than speech especially when such preachers and such converts are too famous to be ignored by their deliberate omission. The names and achievements of such preachers as Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn (Bulbul Shāh), Sayyid Husain Simnānī, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī and Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, to name only a few, who won conversion without any involvement of the state,[3] are so prominently recorded in contemporary Muslim chronicles and hagiographic literature and so deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of the people of Kashmir and so securely preserved in the folk-lore that the Sanskrit chroniclers' indifference to them only highlights their outstanding role as great preachers. Even preachers like Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī and Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī who have been portrayed as zealots by the contemporaries, were no less effective in winning people to their side by persuasive methods. The conversion of Suhabhatta by Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī[4] and the lessons the

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[1] See Chapter II.

[2] The Sanskrit chronicles have totally omitted the mention of even such prominent Muslim preachers as Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn (Bulbul Shāh), Sayyid Husain Simnānī, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, Shaikh Nūr al- Dīn and the like. In fact they have deliberately mentioned only two preachers viz., Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī and Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī to make the posterity believe that conversion took place because of compulsion.

[3] See Chapter II.

[4] Ibid., p.62

Sayyid gave and the books he wrote for Sultān Sikandar to change his thinking portray him as a great inspirer.[5] Despite Jonarāja's reproach for Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī, he could not, however, overlook his extraordinary learning.[6] No less hortative a proselytizer was Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī. The conversion of such influential nobles and *'ulamā'* as Mūsā Raina, Gāzi Chak, Kājī Chak and Mullā 'Alī Najār from Sunnism to Shi'ism,[7] which was considered more sensitive an issue than conversion from Hinduism to Islam[8] only speaks of Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī's outstanding motivating power. Besides, as Jonarāja could not help making a mention of Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī's distinguished scholarship, Śuka could not shut his eyes from Mīr Shamas al-Dīn's knowledge of "all the sciences."[9]

The outstanding contribution of the missionaries in spreading Islam is further substantiated by a strong coincidence between the presence of a missionary and the event of conversion. Interestingly enough, it is mainly during the presence of some leading missionary or missionaries in the Valley that we find mention of conversion to Islam in the sources. In our recorded history the first reference about the conversion pertains to the reign of Rinchana when the ruler himself embraced Islam followed by others.[10] This conversion was prompted by Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn, the first known Sūfi missionary to set foot in the Valley.[11] After the reign of Rinchana upto the time of Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn, the sources are silent about the presence or arrival of any missionary in the Valley and, not surprisingly, there is no mention of any conversion to Islam, though more than thirty years had elapsed since the death of Rinchana and many Muslim rulers had ruled the country.[12] From the reign of Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn there were repeated influxes of Muslim preachers from different parts of Persia and Central

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[5] Ibid., pp.62-63.

[6] "As the bright moon is among the stars, so was Muhammada of Mera country among these Yavanas; and although he was a boy, he became their chief by learning." Jonarāja, p. 57.

[7] See Chapter II, p.69

[8] For the shock which Mīr Shamas al-Dīn's mission caused to the Sunni religious group, see Sayyid 'Ali, ff: 21b-24a.

[9] Śuka, p. 339.

[10] See Chapter II, pp.53-54.

[11] Ibid.

[12] The Muslim rulers who ruled between Rinchana and Sultān Shihāb al- Dīn were: Sultān Shamas al-Dīn Shāh Mīr (1339-42), Sultān Jamshed (1342-43) and Sultān 'Ala al-Dīn (1342-1354).

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Asia (besides the emergence of a local Sūfī order–the Rishi order) and the sources of the period again hum with accounts of conversion to Islam.[13]

Advocate Assets

Although it is abundantly clear that the Muslim divines were mainly responsible for winning conversions, the point that calls for an answer is what accounted for their success. Needless to emphasise, the success or failure of an advocate of innovation is largely determined by what the sociologists call *advocate assets*. These include, among other things, the quality of the innovation and the personality and prestige of the advocate in relation to the advocate of status quo. This reasoning ultimately demands to find out, first, the weaknesses that had crept in the then prevailing religions of Kashmir and their protagonists, and second, the alternative the Muslim preachers offered that met the felt inadequacy.

Role of the Supernatural

Let us begin with that evidence which in the context of conversion predominates in our hagiological sources. The evidence, to put it briefly, is that the conversion to Islam was the result of the supernatural feats performed by the Muslim divines. Interestingly enough, this evidence is strongly supported by the living traditions of Kashmir. It is a matter of great surprise that while talking about the proselytizing activities of the saints, the religious literature, with exceptions, does not make any mention of any other activity, except the miracles employed by the preachers for winning people to their fold.[14] Can this contemporary evidence be dismissed as concocted and, therefore, spurious when the hagiologists could extol the position of the saints more by demonstrating their pious character and teachings, than by attributing supernatural power to them, as miracle-performing finds little respect in Islam?

A dispassionate study would reveal that the miracle-ridden account of the life and activities of the saints is no doubt hyperbolic and exaggerated but it cannot be rejected outrightly. Doubts may be dispelled especially when instead of looking at the situation from the present perspective, one places oneself in the thirteenth and fourteenth century conditions of Kashmir when the divinity of a religion was weighed in terms of the magnitude and quality of miracles its heroes would be able to demonstrate. Needless to say, the search for godliness of a given religion on the basis of 'supernatural powers' of its propagators was a global phenomenon and Kashmir was only an integral part of this view about religions. In the given circumstances, could Islamic teachings or the pious personal character of the saints (or even force) cut any ice without vindicating the spiritual greatness of the religion they represented?

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[13] See Chapter II.

[14] Cf. Ja'far Badakhshī, *Khulasāt al- Manāqib*; Haidar Badakhshī, *Manqabat al-Jawāhir*; Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*; Bābā 'Alī Raina, *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*; Bābā Nasīb, *Nūr- nāma*; Khawāja Ishāq Qārī, *Chilchilat al- 'Ārifīn*; Bābā Haidar Tulmulī, *Hidāyat al- Mukhlisīn*; Bābā Dā'ūd Mishkātī, *Asrār al- Abrār* and Sayyid 'Alī, *Tārīkh-i Kashmir*, ff. 4a-5b, 33a, sqq.

On the eve of the penetration of Islam in Kashmir the writ of the Tantric *gurus* ran large in the Valley. Among other things, they resorted to the performance of mind-boggling magical feats; and their fame as master magicians had spread far and wide. Far away in China, Marco Polo was baffled to hear the unbelievable magical feats of the Kashmiris:

> They have an astonishing acquaintance with the devilries of enchantment; in so much that they make their idols speak. They can also by their sorceries bring on changes of weather and produce darkness, and do a number of things so extra-ordinary that no on without seeing them would believe them.[15]

The conversion of Hindu religion into witchcraft was one of the main challenges for Lalla – the fourteenth century Śaivite ascetic of Kashmir[16] – against which she launched a crusade. While disdaining the miracle performance by the Hindu *sādhūs*, she says:

> To stop a flowing stream; To cool a raging fire;
> To walk on feet in the sky,
> To milk a wooden cow
> All these in the end are but base jugglery.[17]

Kalhaṇa does not only make mention of the widespread use of witchcraft in Kashmir,[18] but by saying that even the honourable and learned men (*bhattapada*) fell to the ground in fear and bent their knees before a Tantric *guru,*[19] he even alludes to the dominating position wrested by the Tantric *gurus* from the learned men owing to their magical powers. Kṣemendra also does not stash away this social reality of his times and like Kalhana he, too, is disquieted by this perverted but influential religious trend.[20] He refers to a *guru* who "is the spiritual teacher not only of the *kāyastha* and his widowed sister, but also of the prostitute who resorts to him to get amulets, etc., for the preservation of her body; of the old trader who even now and then consults him for various purposes; of the country surgeon of the very low position, and lastly of a very third rate eye specialist".[21]

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[15] *The Book of Ser Marco Polo* (ed. & tr. H. Yule), Vol. I, p. 175.

[16] For a detailed account about Lalla's life and teachings, see Grierson and Barnett, *Lalla Vakyani*; Richard Temple, *The Word of Lalla*; Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*, Jaya Lal Kaul and Nand Lal Talib, *Lal Ded*; B. N. Parimoo, *The Ascent of Self*.

[17] Grierson and Barnett, *Lalla-Vakyani*, p. 58

[18] *Rājataranginī*, iv. 88,94, 112, 114, 124, 686; v. 239; vi, 108-112, 121, 310, 312; vii. 133.

A contemporary Muslim chronicler says that when Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī entered Kashmir, the first suggestion that he received from the reigning Sultān, Sultān Qutub al-Dīn, was that if the Sayyid wanted to achieve success in his mission of converting people to Islam then, leaving everything aside, he should first overpower the famous *rāhib* (hermit) of the Kālī Mandir who on account of proficiency in sorcery (*istidrāj*) had won great faith and following both among Hindus and Muslims. And it is said that on the day when the *istidrāj* of the ascetic was exploded four thousand people renounced Hinduism and embraced Islam instead.[22]

In short, the point that we want to make here is that in a society where masses were totally ignorant of religion and the *gurus* were performing unbelievable feats, no teaching and preaching or the demonstration of pious and humane character by the Muslim preachers would have made any headway unless the latter had exposed the 'supernatural feats' of the *sādhūs* and convinced the people of far-superior supernatural power of Islam. That the masses could not be attracted by any philosophy of life however attractive that would be unless the protagonists of that philosophy succeeded in exhibiting some supernatural element in them, is fairly attested by the fact that the Kashmiri Śaiva philosophy, which believed in uncompromising monotheism and rejected occultism, could not make any dent and failed to percolate down to the masses. Credulous masses' inability to understand and appreciate attractive message and programme of life is also lamented by Lalla:

I may confront with ease the laden Southern clouds,
And with as much ease wade through the turbulent ocean,
And find a remedy to lepers and chronically ill,

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[19] Ibid., vii. 279-80.

[20] *Narmamālā*, (ed. Madhusudan Kaul Shastri) Ch. II, verses. 100-16; *Samayamātṛkā* (eds. Durga Prasad and K. P. Parab) VI. 25.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Sayyid 'Alī, ff. 4a-5b.

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But Alas! I can never penetrate the understanding of the ignorant.[23]

Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, a teacher by example, had also to encounter this problem. He laments over the unfortunate mental aura of his times where his message would hold water only if he demonstrated some tricks (*fand*):

I went around the whole of Kashmir,
But no one hailed me at his door;
Then I dressed myself in patched rags,
And they asked me to produce miraculous tricks.[24]

Though Kalhana and Ksemendra had all abhorrence for Tantric *gurus*, they, too, had belief in the 'supernatural' power of the *sādhūs*.[25] And this belief also weighted heavily on the staunch *brāhmanas* of the post-Kalhana period. Jonarāja says that upto his old age, Sultān Qutub al-Dīn had no son and at last there came a *yōgī* named Brāhmanatha and through his favours the king obtained a son.[26] Similarly he says that a son was born to Zain al- 'Ābidīn because of the blessings of a hermit who for this purpose sat on a pillar for nine days with closed eyes and without food.[27] The notion of supposed supernatural powers of the *gurus* was considerably nourished by the medieval conditions marked by mass gullibility, abysmal lack of communication fuelling rumours, recurrent famines and epidemics, helplessness of the people owing to the absence of modern facilities, sparse population and the consequential "goblin grounds",[28] and, above all, by the injections of superstitions and cowardice, injected (through dreaded and fabricated tales and the motivated propaganda by the vested interests) into the masses who did not know doubting and questioning. ~~And when~~ a helpless person had nothing to bank on, he turned to the easily available *guru* for help[29] – the *guru* whose reputation as an elixir was already trumped up or who had with the help of some aids done some such puzzling activities that even the most learned sections of the society were enamoured or frightened by him.[30]

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[23] Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded* (J&K Akademy of Art, Culture and Languages edition), p. 82.

[24] *Kulliyāt-i Shaikh al-'Ālam*, Vol. 1, p. 64

[25] *Rājataranginī*, i. 161-65; iv. 122, 640.

[26] Jonarāja, p. 53.

[27] Ibid., p. 85

[28] See Śuka p. 382 for the unpopulated tracts of land being regarded "goblin grounds".

[29] Of how evil days breed superstitions, we have information from Kalhana. He says, "When some *kāyasthas* [lower official bureaucracy] were suspended from their services by Uccala (1101-1111), they turned to astrologers to examine their nativities, dreams, omens and auspicious marks". *Rājataranginī*, viii. 103.

[30] Ibid., vii. 279-80.

The situation, thus, forced the Muslim preachers to take recourse to the otherwise less preferred choice – the choice of fighting a feat by a feat. In this the Sūfīs did not encounter any difficulty because, after all, an important attribute of a Sūfī was that he was invested with *karāmāt* (miracles).[31] And what is more, by the time Islam reached Kashmir, its preachers had the experience of a similar situation in their own homeland and in other countries which they visited.[32] Thus the inevitable contest, which the two faiths would have been forced to have on fundamental spheres of life, was pushed back by the miracle-mongering society. Disgusted with the kind of Islam that had been reduced to displaying of miracles by the Sūfīs, Mirzā Haidar Dughlat writes disparagingly around 1542:

> The Sūfīs have legitimized so many heresies that they know nothing of what is lawful ... they are forever interpreting dreams, displaying miracles and obtaining from the unseen information regarding either the future or the past.[33]

Even such Sūfīs who were against exploiting spiritual powers to cure mundane ills could not escape the stubborn collective mentality of the period, which regarded a saint as an agent of the miraculous, to whom one could turn in difficulty. Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī quotes Shaikh Hamzāh Makhdūm saying, "Some one comes to me for the safety of his wife and children, some to achieve material benefits and some for other worldly and mundane motives. All these selfish people are not worthy of my company, and they only waste my time".[34] In view of this, we can see why the hagiographers have found no other finest thread than the miracles to embroider the personalities of the saints.[35] To be sure, they had their hands on the pulse of the society. Knowing it fully well that only by propagating the miraculous powers of the saints the people would be enamoured and attracted to their folds, the disciples of the saints resorted to baffling exaggerations.

Before concluding, it is important to mention here that the *gurus* generally used to employ the *mantra* as a deadly charm (*kharkhoda*) to exterminate their opponents[36] or as a tool of extortion to exact money, etc., from the people.[37] Not surprisingly, therefore, the people had become weary of the widespread use of *kharkhoda.*[38] The Muslim preachers launched a strong tirade against witchcraft as it was considered one of the greatest sins (*gunāh-i kabira*).[39] Islam's vehement abhorrence of the employment of sorcery would have, therefore, come as a God-send boon to the people to obtain freedom from the clutches of the *gurus* who were known for *kharkhodavidya* (knowledge of charms).

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[31] *Kashaf a l-Mahjūb* (Eng. tr. Nicholson), pp. 212-213; See also *Dastūr al- Sālikīn,* op. cit.,Vol. I, pp. 649sqq.

[32] See for instance, Ja'far Badakhshi, *Khulāsat al-Manāqib* for Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's supposed miraculous exploits in different parts of the world.

[33] *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, p. 436.

[34] *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, Vol. II, p. 93-97.

[35] This is true of the whole body of hagiographical literature of the period whether it deals with Kubravī saints, Suhrawardī saints or Rishis.

Tantric Hedonism vs Sūfī Austerity

The Tantric *gurus* had not only reduced religion to sorcery, magic and exorcism but they had done worse than that. Hinduism was converted into a revel of sensual orgies. This is borne out by the profuse and downright archaeological and literary evidence of the period.[40]

According to the Tantricists 'five true things' belong to the worship of *Devī* (the Mother Goddess). These are: intoxicating drink (*madirā*), meat (*māmsa*), fish (*matsya*), roast corn (*mudrā*) and physical union (*maithuna*) with *Śakti*. These five rituals are called *Pāncatattva*. And if there is any striking evidence that the *Pāncatattva* was interpreted by the Śaktas as drunken and licentious revels, Kashmir presents it.[41] The perverted faith played havoc with the Kashmiri society not simply by sanctifying excessive drinking and debauchery but by even disregarding *"the distinction between women who are approachable and those who are not"*.[42] Kalhana has presented a grim picture of the Tantric ceremonial in its most hideous form in his account of King Kalasa (1063-1089):

> This guru [Pramadakantha] instructed him [Kalasa]... ignore the distinction between those [women] who are approachable and those who are not. What more need to be said about the

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[36] *Śaivagamas*, pp. 116-117; *Rājataranginī*, iv. 94; v. 239.

[37] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 3b.

[38] *Rājataranginī*, iv. 94; v. 239.

[39] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* (Urdu tr. Shams al-Dīn Ahmad under the title *Dhakhīr-i Sa'ādat*), Vol. I. P. 88.

[40] For detailed information about the Tantric rituals and their observances, see V. N. Drabu, *Śaivagamas*, Chapter IV, pp. 82-126. The employment of sex imagery is not only frequent in the Trantic lore; it is also pre-eminently represented in art motifs. For details, see ibid., pp. 90-92.

[41] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 277-78

[42] Ibid.

> unscrupulousness of this teacher? He, without fear, lived in incest even with his own daughter.[43]

The extent to which Tantricism plagued the moral fabric of the contemporary society is depicted by the basest licentiousness of Kalasa:

> Lusting after the wives of others, he [Kalasa] did not forbear to enjoy the old king's [the father of Kalasa] sister Kallana and her daughter Naga[44].... The king in his lust for illicit amours, used to roam about from house to house during the night[45] ... And eagerly bent upon the celebration of the great rites (*mahāsamaya*) he took great cups in the company of his gurus without regard for moderation[46]... The king, who in deprivation of character sank to the level of animals, abandoned shame and had intercourse with some of his sons' wives.[47]

About the incestuous Harsa (1089-1101), the son and successor of Kalasa, Kalhana says:

> He showed in all respects such weakness of moral sense as befitted a son of King Kalasa. His father's wives who had brought him up on their arms, he took in his arms, kissed them and continually disported himself with them. He had carnal intercourse with his sisters.[48]

The masterful position the Tantric *gurus* had assumed in the society can be gleaned from this sarcastic remark of Kalhana about a Tantric *guru* nicknamed as 'cat merchant'.

> Those honourable and learned men [*bhattapāda*] who knew how to behave at great rites without fear, and who, grimly conscious of their power and inaccessible to terror, would not pay any regard even to Bhairava – they fell to the ground in fear and bent their knees before the 'cat merchant' and were put at ease [again] when he placed his hand on their heads.[49]

It is interesting to recall that the hermit (*rāhib*), with whom Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī had the first encounter, too, was a Tantric *guru*, controlling the most famous temple of Kashmir – Kālī Mandir at Srinagar. According to the contemporary Muslim sources he had overpowered the people by his magic (*istidrāj*) and demanded from them wine (*sharāb*), sheep (*gōsfand*) and bread (*nān*), which he enjoyed in the company of his inmate *gurus* (*rāhibān*) of the temple.[50]

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[43] Ibid., vii. 277, 278.

[44] Ibid., vii. 293, 305, 523, 684.

[45] Ibid., p. 305.

[46] Ibid., p. 523.

[47] Ibid., p. 684.

[48] Ibid., vii. 1146-1148.

[49] Ibid., vii. 279-80.

By treating orgies with women and wine as the most important rituals to attain spiritual objectives, the Tantric *gurus* sanctified sensualism, which directly and indirectly affected the whole society, and even those who abhorred the degeneration of Tantricism into obscenity. Thus not only had the institutions of *devadāsi* and prostitution pervaded the Kashmiri society,[51] but even a religious festival or festivity was incomplete without wine and women.[52] The presence of dancing girls in the temples had vitiated the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the temples, reducing them literally to places of sensual sports.[53] Dancing girls were used for carnal intercourse, even by the kings.[54] It is strange that the *brāhmana* writers of the period do not knit their brows while referring to the dancing girls attached to the temples.[55] Probably their silence gives consent.

That prostitution was considered no serious social evil is evidenced by the recognition the state had given to it.[56] And that an organised institution of prostitution prevailed in Kashmir is borne out by the exhaustive details given by Dāmodaragupta in his *Kuttanīmata* and Ksemandra in the *Samayamātrkā*, *Deśopadeśa* and *Kalāvilāsa* about the prostitutes and the tricks of their trade.[57] We even find the rulers, theirs sons and other grandees ensnared by the courtesans.[58]

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[50] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 3b.

[51] For dancing girls attached to temples, see *Rājataranginī*, iv. 266, 268, 269; iv. 423; vii. 857-58; viii. 707.

[52] Jonarāja, p. 124; *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 182sqq.

[53] *Rājataranginī*, iv. 36; vii. 858, viii. 3338.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Whereas in many parts of India the institution of *devadāsī* was opposed or held in contempt by the *brāhmanas* (B. N. Sharma, (ed.) *Social and Cultural History of Northern India*, p. 75), in Kashmir the situation does not seem so. Kalhana, while referring to the institution, does not upbraid it at all, though he hardly leaves any event or institution of his time without passing moral judgement.

[56] To guard against the tyrannical exactions of courtesans there were officials known as *Vitamandapas*. *Kuttanīmata Kāvya*, 341 (Vide V. N. Drabu, *Kashmir Polity*, p. 180).

[57] See, *Kuttanīmata Kāvya* of Damodaragupta, which gives a vivid description of the life style and activities of the courtesans Dāmodaragupta was the famous poet and chief councillor of King Jayapida of Kashmir (A.D. 779-813). Also, see Ksemendra, *Samayamātrkā*, 11, *passim*; *Deśopadeśa*, 11, *passim*: *Kalāvilāsa*, IV, *passim*.

[58] See *Samayamātrkā*, v. 63-67.

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That the religious festivities had become ceremonised occasions of wild merrymaking marked by excessive drinking, dance and illicit love, of this we have a graphic account from the pen of a contemporary Muslim chronicler.[59] Even Jonarāja refers to drinking and dancing concerts and the "indecorous behaviour of the devotees arising from intoxication which even ordinary men could not have borne" on the occasion of the religious festival of Ganachakra.[60]

Deriding the Kaula *gurus*, Ksemendra writes in *Deśopadeśa*:

> Alcohol in both hands, resolved, humbled by the loss of caste due to the talk of 'Kaula' (about him), with a plate full of fish in his hand, the initiated Bhatta goes to the house of his (Śaiva) teacher. Busy with gargling sounds, the Bhatta drinks, his throat full of 'Bhairava' (recitation) [or: terrible (alcohol)]; in continuity [or: at a "pond"] (alcohol) is licked up; he rolls about, as he holds heavenly water, uneasily. Having spent a whole night (thus), drunken, he has vomited the liquor, his mouth licked by dogs; (but next) morning completely cleansed, with respectful greetings, he (walks) a Bhatta among the other Bhattas[60a]

The moral laxities that emanated from the religious philosophies and rituals of the period exasperated the whole society. The exasperation was inevitable if one thinks for a moment of a society where drinking and making illicit love is considered worship, where prostitution is no evil and the rulers patronize lasciviousness, being themselves morally lax. The natural corollary of this state of affairs was that the mental, moral, spiritual and economic fabric of the society was plagued.[61] It is, therefore, not surprising that notwithstanding the religious roots of sensualism of the period, a strong discontentment was simmering and a section of the contemporaries openly expressed their abhorrence over the *crossing of limits.*[62] However, as they attacked only *excesses* and not the roots, and as the rulers did not fraternize themselves with the reformers, sensual aura continued unabated.

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[59] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 182sqq.

[60] Jonarāja, p. 124.

[60a] *Deśopadeśa*, 8, 11-13, vide Michael Witzel. "The Brahmins of Kashmir" in Yasuke Ikari (ed.), *A Study of the Nilmata – Aspects of Hinduism in Ancient Kashmir*, Kyoto, 1994.

[61] Ksemendra gives a long list of persons who were whole-heartedly welcomed by the prostitutes as they were "like the veritable kalpa tree" (fulfilling all desires). Among such persons were: the only son of a rich man, a young man whose father was dead, a minister of king, the son of a merchant, the physician who looked after the ailing minister for a long time, the son of a famous *guru*, a passionate ascetic, an irresponsible prince, a village official, a notable and rich musician, a merchant who was visiting the city for the first time, an erudite scholar and a hard drunkard. *Samayamātrkā*, v. 63-67.

How the wealth of the country was squandered by the victims of lechery, belonging to the king's family, we have this synoptic but illustrative account from the pen of Kalhana:

Since Islam strongly detests and frowns upon orgies with wine and women and, more importantly, since controlling of *nafs* (carnal desires) was the fulcrum of Sūfism, the life and behaviour of the Muslim preachers would have been definitely an attractive sight for the local people who were fed up with their libidinous *gurus* and the sensual climate created by them. Besides being the symbols of puritan Islam, which they demonstrated through their life style, the teachings of saints mainly focused on controlling bodily passions. Probably the

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> The treasures which King Sussala had accumulated by tormenting the subjects were, by this extravagant [prince], put freely to uses which corresponded [to their manner of acquisition]. For he, inflamed with wantonness and of a low mind, drove away honest people and fostered a host of courtesans, strolling players, rogues, parasites, slaves and the like... Samaskaravarman's treasures, which were obtained by maltreating the people, were freely used by Prabhakara and the other paramours of his wife. The wives of Pangu (Nirjitavarman) subdued by love, gave away [their husband's] wickedly acquired riches to Sugandhaditya who enjoyed their embraces. The great wealth which king Yasaskara had accumulated, was used up by his wife who, compelled by love, had embraced a *candāla*. The son of Parvagupta (Ksemagupta) left on his death, the riches he had inherited as the acquisitions of former kings, for Tunga and the rest, his wife's parmours. Samgramaraja, who was bent incessently on amassing riches, was plundered by Vyaddasuha and others who, bee-like, kissed the lotus - face of Śrilekha ... King Kalasa's treasures which had been acquired by skill in evil arts, were speedily squandered by his son on unworthy persons and by his wife on paramours *Rājataranginī*, viii. 1949, 1950, 1953.1954. 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959.

Ksemendra says that he has written satirical pornography for the guidance of the youth and rich people who fall easily into the snares of courtesans and waste the wealth of the country. Vide, N.S.Sbukla, *Cultural Trends in Kashmir and Ksemendra*, p. 81.

Kalhana particularly includes "the aged dancing girls of the temple" into the group of discontented elements who take delight in the King's misfortune. *Rājataranginī*, viii. 706-710.

How even a great king like Lalitaditya lost his senses and became literally mad in a drunken state, Kalhana has this information for us, "On one occasion when the king was stopping at Parihaspura in company of the ladies of his seraglio, he gave, while intoxicated by drink, the following orders to the ministers. 'That (town of) Parvarapura, which Parvarasena made, burn it down if you think its beauty is like that of mine." *Rājataranginī*, iv. 310, 311

[62] This section is represented by the people like Dāmodaragupta, Ksemendra and Kalhana

Muslims had expressed their abhorrence of obscenity long before the establishment of the Sultanate. Ksemendra (d.1065) refers to a courtesan refusing to accept the fee from his customers owing to the fear of "*mleccha* [Muslim] singers".[63] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī quotes Abu Tālib Makki saying that according to all available *Hadith* adultery and drinking of wine figure in the list of the greatest sins (*gunāh-i kabīra*) which would condemn one to Hell.[64] While regarding chastity as one of the important conditions for earning proximity with Allah,[65] the Sayyid even offers a prescription of how to control sex.[66] And when he exhorted Sultān Qutub al-Dīn and also convinced him to divorce one of his wives and to give up other un-Islamic practices,[67] he was actually demonstrating and preaching the puritan Islamic life style.[68] The preachers who entered the Valley after him launched a vigorous campaign against voluptuous practices regarded as religious rituals. It seems that Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī made it an important issue of his missionary campaign. That is why those who embraced Islam at his hands became zealous adherents of puritan life and forced the non-Muslims to stop sensual practices.[69] Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn and other Rishis strongly believed in controlling *nafs* (carnal desires) and lived a severely virtuous life.[70] They even rejected conjugal life[71] and one of them is seen going to the extent of cutting his penis.[72] Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī also launched a vigorous campaign against the lascivious religious practices and preached against indulgence in drink, dance and debauchery.[73] The Muslim preachers attached so much importance to the issue of chastity that they raised eyebrows against having women disciples by a *Shar'iah* conscious Sūfī like Shaikh Hamzah

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[63] Ksemendra, *Samayamātrkā*. Vide, Moti Chandra, *The World of Courtesans*, Chapter "The Courtesans of Kashmir", p. 184.

[64] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, Vol. I, p.88.

[65] Ibid., *passim*.

[66] Ibid., pp. 342-43.

[67] See supra, p.58

[68] Cf. *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 342-43 for Sayyid Ali's exhortations against becoming slaves of carnal desires. He also suggested some remedial measures to check imperious biological impulses. Ibid.

[69] Supra, pp.62,64.

[70] Controlling of carnal desires (*nafs*) is the main focus of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn's teachings. See *Kulliyāt*, op. cit.; *Nūr- nāma*, op. cit., *T'ānai-i Shaikh al- 'Ālam*, op. cit.

[71] For details, see *Sūfism in Kashmir*, op.cit., pp. 134-207.

[72] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 43b.

[73] *Tuhfat al Ahbab*, pp. 182 sqq.

Makhdūm.[74] That Muslim preachers made it an important plank of their conversion movement and that it cut much ice can be inferred from the fact that whereas during the reign of the Hindu rulers moral laxity was a common sight, prostitution centres were rampant, the seraglios of the rulers were teemed with queens and concubines,[75] no religious festival and convivial party was complete without drink and dance;[76] during the reign of the Sultāns, on the other hand, prostitution centres did not exist at all,[77] the Sultāns, with one or two exceptions, strongly adhered to a good moral character, except one Sultān[78] the Sultāns did not have more than three or four wives, and the simple prayers and devotional rituals marked the mode of worship and religious festivals of the Muslims.[79]

Besides enjoying wine, meat and sex by treating them essential *Śiviastic* rituals, *Śaiva gurus* enjoyed luxurious life free from inhibitions and restraints. We have a glimpse of the aristocratic *āśrama*-life and the hedonistic life-style of the *Śaiva gurus* from the pen of Madhurāja, one of the disciples of Abhinavagupta (A.D. 960-1040):

> In the middle of the vineyard is a platform (*mandapa*) of marble stone studded with precious rubies and painted with miniature paintings of flowers, birds, etc. The *mandapa* radiated the fragrance of flowers, garlands, incense, burning earthen lamps and was smeared with sandal, *agru*, *gorocana*, etc. It constantly resounded with a dance orchestra. The *mandapa* was full of *yoginīs* and *siddhas*. On a golden seat placed on the marble platform decorated with rubies and hangings of pearl- strings on all its four sides, is seated Abhinavagupta.... on either side of the master stood the two *yoginīs* each holding in one of their hands a goblet full of

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[74] Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī had to quote authority after authority to justify this controversial matter of having women disciples by his *murshid*. *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. I, pp. 426 sqq.

[75] For a large number of queens and concubines in the seraglios of the Hindu rulers, see *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, iv. 207, 310, 396, 466, 663, 677-78; v. 361-86, 444; vi. 74, 88, 138; vii. 521, 858, 862, 963.

[76] Jonarāja, p. 124; *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb*, pp. 182 sqq.

[77] There is no direct or indirect mention of the existence of any such centre in the sources of the Sultanate period.

[78] Sultan Hasan Shāh (1472-1484) was the only ruler who had a large number of concubines in his seraglio.

[79] This mode of worship impressed even such a die-hard *brāhmaṇa* as Śrīvara, pp. 235-36.

> wine, *Śivarasa* and a casket containing betel, and in the other the citron fruit and a water lily... He [Abhinavagupta] had a lustrous body ... He wore a white moon-like resplendent silken robe... He somewhere got into close communion with *Deśikāyoginīs* who disporting themselves with him said, 'Till this day the flow of this entire guru-tradition (*guru-krama*) is reflected in you.'[80]

A philosophy, which merely satisfied the desires of body, was prone to rational attack and consequently liable to vanquish. Sometimes the attack comes from within. This is what exactly happened in Kashmir.[81] However, the attack that came from without was revolutionary and with a promise to provide alternative – a strait-laced society.

By quite contrast to the aristocratic life style of the *gurus* and their *aśramas*, the Sūfīs, consistent with their philosophy, treated this world and its luxuries with all contempt, to say the least. All the works of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī exhort the readers to control mundane desires and reject pompous life.[82] While dissuading the people from becoming the slaves of *nafs*, the Sayyid says:

گر سگ نفس تو بفرمان تست   تو یقین دان که بهشت آن تست
دشمن تست این سگ وازسگ بتر   عشوهٔ دشمن تو ازین بیش مخر

If the dog of *nafs* is under your control
[then] Believe, Paradise is yours;
This dog [*nafs*], but worse than a dog, is your emeny,
So don't be beguiled by its tricks. [83]

In order to inspire the Muslims to live a simple life, Sayyid 'Ali quotes the austere life-style of various Prophets including Prophet Muhammad and the first four Caliphs.[84] He himself earned his livelihood by making caps,[85] although the rulers vainly offered him fabulous gifts.[86] He is reported to have said that had the *Shari'ah* not prevented him he would have preferred to observe fasts throughout his life and would have never married.[87] Sayyid 'Ali became a model for Kashmiri Sūfīs, a majority of whom were his direct and indirect disciples. The famous Suhrawardī saint- scholar, Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, quotes Qur'ān, *Hadith* and various Sūfī masters to emphasize the commonest Sūfī point of view that real *jahād* is *jahād* against one's *nafs*, the real *'ibādat* (worship) is rejection of worldly allurements and the great sin is love for the mundane world.[88] He also emphasized the Sūfī belief that action (*'amal*) is more important than knowledge (*'ilm*).[89] Since alongwith the other ideals of Islamic life, the Sūfīs preached and practised simple life, it worked wonders. When preaching commensurates with practising, the miracles it works can be understood by quoting Lalla, who observes, though in a different context:

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[80] *Gurunotha-Parāmarsa*, pp. 1-20. Vide, *Śaivagamas*, pp. 127- 128.

[81] For an indigenous protest against the hedonistic life style of the *gurus*, see Kalhana, vii. 277-284.

[82] See, for example, his *Dhakhīrat al- Mulūk*; *Risala-i-Dah Q'aida*; *Risala-i M 'arifat-i Zuhd*; *Risala-i Faqriyya*; *Risala-i Fututiyya* and *Risala-i Akhlaqiyya*.

[83] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, p. 329.

[84] For details, see *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*.

[85] *Khulāsat al-Manāqib*, p. 542.

[86] Haidar Malik, p. 43.

> I practised what I read,
> And learnt what was not taught.
> From its jungle abode,
> I brought the lion down,
> As I a jackal would;
> I practised what I preached,
> And scored the goal.[90]

Polytheism vs Monotheism

While it is true that Tantrism had made deeper influences on all cults of Kashmir, the fact remains that the Smarta Saivism, with its emphasis on idol worship, pantheism, rituals, ceremonies and *varnāśramadharma*, formed the dominent tradition. The people were made to believe in stocks, stones, rivers, springs, mountains, trees and, in fact, in all the primitive forms of worship.[91] Faith in these different objects was based on the belief that they represented the symbols of different deities and, therefore, shared supernatural powers.[92] Thus the people worshipped the idols and different objects either because of fear or for the hope of some reward.[93] Such a belief was very vulnerable to rational attack, which sometimes comes out from amongst the believers themselves.

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[87] *Khulāsat al- Manāqib*, pp. 456, 540.
[88] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, I. pp. 18-21; II. pp. 403-409, 450.
[89] Ibid., II. pp. 377 sqq.
[90] Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*, p. 104.
[91] See *Nīlamatapurāna*; *Māhātmyas* of the popular tirthas of Kashmir; also see Śrivara, pp. 59, 146-48; Suka, p. 339; Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 299.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

The Muslim preachers realized the efficacy of arguing against the faith in object worship.[94] And when they cut the trees which were considered the symbols of different deities,[95] hunted in the jungles regarded to be the "abode of gods",[96] defiled those places which to the contemporaries were "goblin grounds",[97] and asked the converts to construct mosques with materials of their previous places of worship,[98] the Muslim missionaries were doing nothing but flaunting the fallacy of the very religious notions held by the local people. The demolition of idols and felling of the "sacred trees" by the neo-converts without causing any harm to the latter must have shaken the very faith of the people in what they were made to believe. The people, who were committed to a faith simply because they were made to believe that the objects they worshipped were actually gods with supernatural powers,[99] would have obviously lost faith in it once nothing of that sort happened following the elimination or desecration of these objects. The fact that the masses were made to believe in the godly powers of different objects and that this belief was exposed by Islam with natural consequences, is blurted out in the following aside remark, Śrivara passes on the Islamic acculturation of Kashmir:

> The kingdom of Kashmira was polluted by the evil practices of the *mlecchas*; and the *brāhmanas*, the *mantras* and the gods relinquished their power. The gods, who used to make the glory of their prowess manifest, even as fireflies manifest their light, now hide their glory on account of the country's sin. When the gods withdrew their glory, their images became mere stones and the *mantras*, mere letters.[100]

For a long time a strong revolt had been simmering in a section of Hindus against the kind of religion, preached and practised by the *brāhmanas*. At times this revolt found open expression in the ruthless defilement of idols.[101] As a matter of fact, the spoliation of temples by King Harsa (1089-1101)[102] was not an aberration. By contrast, he

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[94] See, for example, Sayyid 'Ali, op. cit., ff. 38 ab, for a discussion between Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn Rishi and Bābā Bām al-Dīn (before the latter's conversion) on idolatory.

[95] Śuka, p. 339; *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb*, pp. 195-96, 274.

[96] Śrivara, p. 260.

[97] Śuka, p. 382.

[98] A large number of the extant mosques of Kashmir are made of stones procured from the temples.

[99] Śrivara, p. 59; Śuka, p. 339. *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb*, pp. 195, 196, 274.

[100] Śrivara, p. 59.

[101] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 696, 1087 sqq.

[102] Ibid., vii. 1087, sqq.

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represents a strong non-conformist movement, which was at its acme in Kashmir during his times. Considering the nature of his narrative, Kalhana does not give details about this movement. But it assumed such a nihilist character during the reign of Harsa and the role of the ruler was so prominent in the eruption of this social volcano that Kalhana could no longer afford to omit it. Although he is not very downright, he pours out a truth when one reads him between the lines: that Harsa was only a vocal votary of a movement that was making deep inroads into the religious attitudes of the higher echelons of the society. Consider the following information supplied by him:

> Ksema, the son of Vemana, knowing that he [Harsa] hated his father, urged him on to remove the gold on the parasol which was placed over the [shrine of Śaiva] Kalasesa. The pious Prayagaka cunningly stopped this plan of his[103]... The wretch Lostadhara... spoke thus once in secret to the king, in the hope of gratifying him: "let the villages, the gold, and other [property] bestowed upon the [temple of Śaiva] Kalasesvara be taken away. With the stones of that temple, I shall build you a bridge over the Vitasta..." But Prayaga dissuaded his lord also from this intention... Then Lostadhara, once at a time of jesting, asked the king to set a god free from his captivity ...[104]
>
> In order to get hold of the statues of gods, too, when the treasures [of the temples] had been carried off, Harsa appointed Udayaraja 'prefect for the overthrow of divine images (*devotpātananāyaka*)'. In order to defile the statues of gods he had excrements and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet and hands had rotted away. Divine images made of gold, silver and other [materials] rolled away even on the roads, which were covered with night soil as [if they were] logs of wood. Crippled naked mendicants and the like covered the images of the gods, which were dragged along by ropes round their ankles, with spittings instead of flowers. There was not one temple in a village, town or in the City which was not despoiled of its images by that *Turuska*, King Harsa.[105]

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[103] Ibid., vii. 1073-1077.

[104] Ibid., 1074-80.

[105] Ibid., 1091-95.

The utter disbelief, shown by many courtiers of Harsa, represented here by Ksema, Losthadhara and Udayaraja, in gods, images and temples and the conspicuous mention of 'mendicants' specially engaged in the defilement and desecration of images vouch in clear terms for the existence of a strong movement of counter-culture that had recruited a sizable following. However, owing to the strong hold of the protagonists of Brāhmanical religion on the masses (whose primitive belief system had little changed in spite of religious vicissitudes together with the want of political patronage minus Harsa), the heterodox movement simmered down, but did not die. It rejuvenated once again with the assumption of political power by the Muslims; and no wonder, then, that we find during the early phase of the Sultanate, when Muslims were sensitive enough not to antagonise the Hindus even in the least, the Hindu ministers suggesting the Sultāns to melt the images to overcome financial crisis.[106] The way Suhabbatta became a champion of iconoclasm after his conversion to Islam simply speaks of his deep-rooted disagreement with idol worship.[107]

This is not, however, all. We also come across a tirade launched against the object worship by a section of Hindu intellectuals. Lalla is an outstanding representative of the 'dissenters' of the time. It is interesting to quote a few of her fulminating verses against idol worship and ritualistic practices associated with it:

The idol is but stone,
The temple is but stone,
From top to bottom all is stone whom will you worship,
O stubborn Pandit?
Let the *prāna* and the mind unite.[108]

He does not need the *kusa* grass, or sesame seed;
Flowers and water He does not need.
He who, in honest faith, accepts his Guru's word,
On Siva meditates constantly,
He, full of joy, from action freed, will not be born again.[109]

It covers your shame,
Saves you from cold,
Its food and drink –
Mere water and grass.

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[106] Supra, p.112.

[107] Supra, p.115.

[108] Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*, p. 110

[109] Ibid.

> Who counselled you, O brāhmana,
> To slaughter a living sheep as a sacrifice,
> Unto a lifeless stone?[110]

It may not be beside the point to add that alongside the fact that the *brāhmanas* were dreaded, if not respected, by the rulers and the people, a parallel trend of showing an open defiance of whatever respect the traditional notions demanded for what Kalhana calls "gods of the earth"[111] was simultaneously keeping itself up. As far back as the reign of Tarapida, Kalhana says: "Thinking that the *brāhmanas* through their spells caused the power of the gods to be present, he [Tarapida] in his hatred of gods meted out punishment to the *brāhmanas*".[112] There are also frequent references to revoking of land grants *(agrahāras)*, enjoyed by the temples and *brāhmanas*, by many rulers either out of their own conviction or at the instance of their ministers[113] which alludes to the erosion of faith in 'gods' and thereby the religion they represented.[114] Even King Jayapida is said to have remarked: "Let it be reported [to me] if a hundred *brāhmana* less one die in a single day".[115] Jonāraja begins his account of the kings of Kashmir (by taking the thread from Kalhana) with a conspicuous mention that Sussala "respected gods and the twice-born",[116] pointing patently to the presence of a contrary and strong belief.

Where, on the one hand, the non-conformist movement weakened the position of Brāhmanism, it, conversely, facilitated the movement for conversion to Islam. It may not be an exaggeration to say that the defilement of idols and the tirade launched against idolatory and its protagonists was tantamount to the outright rejection of Brāhmanism as such. In such a situation the Muslim preachers had simply to consolidate the work already done by the 'dissenters', by infusing a new vigour into the movement and Islamizing it. It may be noted that besides the rejection of idolatory, the other essentials of the religion of the 'dissenters' were either identical to or bordered on the teachings and practices of the Sūfi missionaries.[117] That is why to a common Kashmiri Muslim the disclosure that Lalla was not a Muslim sounds a puzzle. While for the 'dissenters' entering into the fold of Islam was nothing less than adding richness and respectability to their religious outlook especially when Islam and its adherents had made a great dent in all medieval civilizations, the full-blooded heterodox movement must have loosened emotional chords of the general public with Brāhmanism, particularly when the whole brunt of the ritual-ridden worship was borne by the common man[118] and the religious section had shown a base carnal greed.[119] All in all, therefore, the 'dissenters' helped the Muslim missionaries in taking a big leap towards achieving their goal. They had already accomplished a crucial job–rejection of Brāhmanical institutions, which would have otherwise acted as a great barrier in the way of the Muslim missionary. By removing the stumbling barriers and teaching the ideals, which presented a close affinity with Islam, they prepared the society to cross the thin line.

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[110] Ibid.

[111] *Rājatarangiṇī*, viii. 2238, 2382.

[112] Ibid., iv. 122.

[113] *Rājatarangiṇī*, v. 166-70; vii. 43, 106, 570; viii. 2224-2226.

[114] According to the Brāhmanical code of ethics, killing of *brāhmanas* and removing the relics of gods or temples is among the deadly sins for which five hundred hells with all conceivable types of tortures exist in various forms. For details, see V. N. Drabu, *Śaivāgamas*, p. 68.

[115] *Rājatarangiṇī*, iv. 633.

[116] Jonarāja, p.4.

Corruption of Buddhism

Buddhism, the second largest religion of Kashmir, presented a more dismal picture as it had sunk in much depravity. A clear proof of the systematic decaying process of Buddhism in Kashmir goes long back to the 3rd century A.D.; and the trend accelerated further from the 5th century A.D. onwards owing to its thorough absorption by Tantrism and Śaivism – the cults which dominated the religious scene of Kashmir on the eve of the introduction of Islam in the Valley. The depiction of nudity, eroticism, dancing and music on the tiles of a famous Buddhist site of Kashmir, Harwan, datable to the 3rd century A.D.,[120] is ample proof of violent departure from the basic doctrines of the Great Master–Buddha. With the increasing influence of alien beliefs and practices Buddhism was also reduced to a religion of idolatory and sorcery. Besides making and worshipping the images of Buddha and Bodhisattavas, Buddhists carved and worshipped the images of many gods and godesses as Avlokeśvara, Vignantaka, Tara,

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[117] See Chapter III, pp.90-92.

[118] For the fact that the rituals took social surplus from the laity which was then appropriated by the *brāhmanas*, see *Śaivagamas*, op. cit., pp. 100, 101, 183.

[119] Ibid.

[120] For the Harwan tiles, see R. C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, Plates XVIII-XLII; Robert E. Fisher, "The Enigma of Harwan", in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, pp. 1-9.

Kurukulla, etc.[121] It is interesting that of the available stone, ivory and metal images, the predominant number belongs to Buddhist religious themes.[122] Certainly, the period from the 7th century onwards can best be termed Tantric Buddhism, so much was Kashmiri Buddhism assimilated by Tantrism. That Buddhism had become the religion of sorcery and magic is amply borne out by Kalhana[123] and a large number of *Tantras* written by the Kashmiri Buddhists like the Śaivites.[124] In course of time these practices had so much corrupted the *bhiksus* that they were nothing save drunkards, gamblers, meat-eaters and debauchers. An estimation of the general state of degenerated Buddhism can be had from the following sarcasm of Ksemendra (d.1065):

Q. Bhiksu; why is your body so emaciated?
A. *On account of catching fish.*
Q. Do you eat fish?
A. *Yes. It is part and parcel of wine.*
Q. Do you drink wine?
A. *Yes, in the company of women*
Q. Do you mix with women?
A. *Yes, after I strangle my enemies.*
Q. Have you enemies?
A. *Because I burgle.*
Q. Are you a thief?
A. *Yes I gamble.*
Q. Are you a gambler?
A. *Yes I am a bhiksu.*[125]

Interestingly, we hear of a *bhiksu* who was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment on the charge of killing a *brāhmana's* calves.[126] Considering the thorough degeneration of Buddhism, discontentment among sensitive Buddhists was inevitable. Rincbana's dissatisfaction with Buddhism is a typical example of the spiritual unrest that had permeated among the sensitive souls of this religion.[127]

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[121] See John Siudmak, "Early Stone and Terracotta Sculpture," in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Kashmir*, plates, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19; Stanislaw Czuma, "Ivory Sculpture," in Pratapaditya Pal, op.cit., pp. 57-72; Pratapaditya Pal, "Metal Sculpture," in Pratapaditya Pal, op.cit., Plates. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 19. 20, 21.

[122] Ibid.

[123] *Rājatarangini*, i. 131-147, 199.

[124] G. N. Gauhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, pp. 107-8.

[125] *Lokaprakaśa, Indische Studien*, XVIII, 1898, p. 367.

[126] Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, op.cit., p. 186.

[127] *Bahāristān-i Shāhi*, f. 6b.

Self vs Self-effacement

As mentioned earlier, the success of an advocate of change largely depends upon the quality of the innovation in relation to the advocate of status quo. While in regard to the success or failure of a religion transcendental beliefs and associated rituals have played a role, the causing cause for the triumph of a religion over another has been a given religion's relative resources to solve the pragmatic and mundane day-to-day problems faced by the people. Fortunately enough, we have some religious literature produced by the Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim savants and scholars of Kashmir. The Hindu and Buddhist religious literature is of two categories: one deals with religious philosophies[128] and the other with religious rituals.[129] But neither the philosophy nor the rituals smack of anything having a feeling for the tangible mundane problems of the society. On the other hand, both the types of literature articulated in favour of a religious system where the weak had to live for the sake of the strong. Apart from dealing with the mystical cobwebs, beyond the comprehension of the people, the *Āgmas*[130] "prescribe the brāhmanical code of ethics and uphold the dominance of the priestly class and their interests".[131] All those actions are termed wrong actions that "are against the social ethics of the brāhmanical order and hence the provision for punishment for those deadly sins."[132] Also, the *Āgmas* state that the *sādhika* (disciple) is required to please his *guru* with all means at his disposal. "Not only the village or the kingdom are to exchange hands, but even the belongings of sons, daughters and family are to be surrendered to the overlord along with the obligation of pledging one's life in the service of one's master".[133] The religious literature, that simply deals with the plethora of religious rituals to be performed on auspicious days at different *tīrthas*, seems to have been produced to create a mass mentality in favour of preparing the masses to part with the *brāhmanas* whatever little they were left with after being robbed off by the state, so numerous is the number of auspicious days and so much emphasis is laid upon bestowing gifts on the *brāhmanas* on each occasion.[134]

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[128] See V. N. Drabu, *Śaivagamas*; G. N. Ganhar and P. N. Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, pp. 58sqq; S. C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, pp.198-201.

[129] In this context mention may be made of *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, the canonical authority for Brāmanical cult in Kashmir and the *Sthanamāhātmyas* of which 51 have already been recorded, each of which deals with a particular place of pilgrimage, the merit to be acquired by their visits and the rites to be performed at each of the sites.

[130] *Āgma* is a religious treatise inculcating the mystical worship of Śaiva-Śakti, which became the basis of Tantricism and was also characteristically shared both by Tantric Buddhism and Kashmiri Śaivism. For details, see *Śaivagamas*, op.cit., pp. 22-27.

[131] Ibid., p. 68.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid., p.186

Islam, needless to emphasize, essentially addresses the issues faced by mankind in the mundane world. The Sūfīs, who stressed the spiritual aspect of Islam, did not, however, ignore Islam's basic orientation towards bringing about a just society. We have two types of literature produced by the Sūfīs of the period viz., Sūfī texts (including biographical literature) and the literature that deals with social problems. Even the Sūfī texts and biographical literature are not devoid of social relevance. The refrain of this literature is *zabt-i nafs* – controlling of insatiable lust for carnal desires and wordly possessions, luxuries and allurements, curbing of beastly instincts and reining in one's preference to one's family interests, etc.[135] – which had a direct bearing on creating a just and healthy society. It should be mentioned that the Sūfīs who worked for the spread of Islam in Kashmir belonged to those Sūfī *silsilas* which believed in active life rather than shunning the world, and which regarded the missionary work for Islamization of the life and conduct of the people as the best service in the way of Allah.[136] Not surprisingly, therefore, they presented Islam in its totality. The extent to which Islam was presented as a perfect theory aiming at curing societal ills and building a just society, *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, the *magnum opus* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, is a case in point.[137] The work, which was the main guidebook of the Kubrāvīs of Kashmir and the primary literary instrument for popularizing Islam,[138] mainly preaches ethical values and social justice as provided in Islam. Thus alongside preaching against the social vices like greed, miserliness, extravagance, perfidy, hypocrisy, conceit, pride, jealousy, backbiting, vengeance, anger, cruelty, selfishness, fault-finding, lying, ill-manners and the like, the Sayyid brings to fore those social, economic, cultural and politico-administrative aspects of Islam which are aimed at serving the interests of the poor, weak and destitute sections of society. He persuasively preaches in favour of sharing wealth with the poor and needy,[139] good treatment towards one's parents, wives, servants, slaves, neighbours, friends and relatives.[140] He denounces haggling, blackmarketing and cheating by traders and businessmen.[141]He even gives sermons against polluting the environment[142] and blocking the pathways and roads by creating different kinds of barricades.[143] In effect, the Sayyid lays much stress on the fact that one should not simply live for oneself, but should also live for others, as every Muslim has some fundamental duties of economic, social, cultural, religious and political nature towards the other Muslims in whose performance he should not shirk.[144] No less significant, however, are his views about the origin and nature of the state, theory of kingship and the advice he gives to the rulers with regard to running the administration. What he regards as the basic conditions for a just governance, will be dealt with below. Here suffice it to say that according to him the fundamental purpose of the state is to do justice by protecting the weak against the strong[145] and treating all – *khās* (high) and *'ām* (commoners) – on an equal footing[146] for which according to him *zabt-i nafs* on the part of the ruler and the implementation of the *Shari'ah* are the essential pre-requisities.[147] It is significant to mention that besides writing a book on *tasawwuf* for Sultān Sikandar, Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī prevailed upon the Sultān to enforce his father's political thought, and it was at his instance that Sultān Sikandar opened a hospital (*dar al- shafā*) where the patients were not only treated free but they were also provided free medicine, food, and lodging.[148]

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[134] See *Nīlamatapurāṇa* and *Sthānamāhātmyas*

[135] See, for example, the treatises of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī and the works of Suhrawardī saints of Kashmir like Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, Bābā Nasīb and others (For their works, see Bibliography).

[136] It may be mentioned that the Sūfīs of Kashmir mainly belonged to Suhrawardī and Kubrāvī orders. For the importance which Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī laid on missionary work for implementing *Sharī'ah*, see *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, p. 264.

[137] Becuase of the importance of the work, it has been translated into many languages viz., Latin, French, Turkish and Urdu. Its MSS are preserved in many libraries of the world.

[138] The Kubrāvīs of Kashmir, who regarded Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī as their spiritual leader, dominated the religious scene of Kashmir upto the late 16th century. The Suhrawardīs who assumed prominence in Kashmir from the late sixteenth century also considered *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* an important work for guidance. Cf. *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. I. p.4

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[139] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, I, pp. 99-115.

[140] Ibid., pp. 139-166.

[141] Ibid., pp. 259-260.

[142] Ibid., p. 261.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid., pp. 156-166.

[145] Ibid., p. 171.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

[148] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.16b.

Whereas the Muslim preachers preached and practised *zabt-i nafs* and launched a tirade against *zulum* (tyranny) on the part of rulers and other elements of the society, we find crass materialism permeated into the ranks of the *brāhmanas*, who approached every subject just to serve their petty mundane interests.

Kashmir was probably the only place in the whole Indian subcontinent where the *brāhmanas* had become the greatest political power to reckon with. They were dreaded by the rulers and the ministers alike, though they were particularly expert at fishing in troubled waters. The *brāhmana* priests (*purohitas*) had organised themselves into corporations (*parsad*) at all important shrines and pilgrimage centres and frequently resorted to solemn fasts (*Prāyopavesās*) as an effective and powerful means of pressure tactics.[149] However, sunk as they were in base avarice, they at no time used this combined self-assertion for safeguarding the interests of the people, nor did they use their might to protect the religion that had given them the position of "gods of earth", from frontal attacks of their own rulers. Kalhana's *Rājataranginī* mentions a number of instances of solemn fasts undergone by the *brāhmana* priests but at each time they used a fast as a means of coercion when their pure selfish mundane interests were put in jeopardy.[150] They not only acted as mute spectators of the wretched conditions of the masses which aggravated under cruel rulers who imposed as many as twelve kinds of forced labour (*rūdhabhārodhi*)[151] but they instigated the rulers to fleece the peasants so that they should never muster courage to raise their voice against oppression This is clear from the Mechiavellian advice Kalhana, the famous historian and comparatively seasoned *brāhmana*, puts into the mouth of Lalitaditya:

> Every care should be taken that there should not be left with the villagers more food supply than required for one year's consumption, no more oxen than wanted for [the tillage] of their fields. Because if they should keep more wealth they would become in a single year very formidable *Damaras* and strong enough to neglect the commands of the king. When once the villagers obtain the clothes, women, woollen clothes, food, ornaments, horses, such as are fit for the

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[149] Cf. *Rājataranginī*, v. 465 sqq; vii. 13 sqq; viii. 90 sqq, 939 sqq.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid., v. 174.

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> town;.... then the change for the worse in the subjects' fortune may be known for certain.[152]

Also, consider this remark which Kalhana makes while referring to the construction of a temple and the wealth showered upon the *brāhmanas* by Ajitapida and his ministers: "Whether their wealth had been obtained *by fraud or by righteous means all were pleased* with it through their liberality"[153] [emphasis added]. Needless to say to Kalhana all means *brāhmanas*.[154] That the *brāhmanas* had to be pleased by bestowing wealth and showering presents, no matter if this wealth were obtained by fraudeulant means, was the dominant tradition's approach to justice.

By contrast, we find the Muslim preachers exhorting the rulers to give top priority to the welfare of the masses. Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī raises a just ruler to the position of the deputy or vicegerent of God on earth:

> When a ruler follows the path of justice and equity and strives to establish the Divine Law, and executes the decrees of religion, he is the chosen deputy (*nāib*) of God and His shadow and vicegerent (*khalifah*) upon earth. But if he turns away from the path of justice and equity... follows his lusts and desires..., he is, indeed, the deputy of the impostor (*dajjāl*) and the enemy of God and His Prophet and the vicegerent of Satan.[155]

He warns the cruel rulers that they will be subjected to very severe punishment and incessant torture in the after-life for having betrayed the trust, which God reposed in them.[156] He reminds them that on the Day of Judgement the first question that would be put to them would be about their justice and bounty.[157] The ten rules that he prescribes in his *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* for a Muslim ruler to follow while discharging his duties revolve round his heartfelt desire to see a Muslim-ruled state as a symbol of just government. In this context it may be pertinent to quote a few 'rules':

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[152] *Rājataranginī*, iv. 347, 348, 349-50.

[153] Ibid., iv. 701.

[154] Kalhana, while forgetting the other sections of the society, is critical of all those rulers who have not been liberal in their patronage towards *brāhmanas*. See *Rājataranginī*, iv. 631 sqq; v. 165 sqq; vii. 38 sqq; viii. 2224 sqq.

[155] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, Vol. I, p. 182.

[156] Ibid., 186

[157] Ibid.

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1. When a case is brought to him [the ruler], he should place himself in the position of the subject [petitioner]. This will not allow him to do injustice, as he will not like it for himself.[158]
2. He should take full care of the needs and requirements of his subjects. And only after discharging this duty he should discharge obligatory prayers. He should leave no stone unturned in solving the problems of helpless, poor and destitute people. He should give preference to poor and weak over rich and resourceful people.[159]
3. He should always make enquiries about the activities of his officers and should not appoint cruel officers. If any of them commits acts of dishonesty or shows cruelty, he should be given exemplary punishment, so that others may take warning.[160]

This concern for justice shown by the reputed saint, distinguishes the Muslim preachers from the advocates of status quo whose main concern was to fatten themselves by fair or foul means and who did not feel the pangs of the oppressed around them. Worse, they, as mentioned above, instigated the rulers to fleece the common people and invented fraudulent tactics to rob the people of what was left to them by the rapacious government.[161]

It seems that Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's exhortations had some impact on the administration of the Sultāns.[162] After all, the Sayyid's mission was carried forward by a big chain of his followers who settled in the Valley and earned highest respect among all strata of the society. No wonder that *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* was one of the widely read books of the time.[163] The Sūfīs' concern for social justice must have made a magnetic appeal to the oppressed and neglected lot of Kashmiris.

That the *brāhmanas*, with exceptions, had material rather than emotional attachment with the religion they espoused is evidenced by their compromising and even conspiratorial role when Harsa was defiling and desecrating the temples and images[164] or when Cakravarman and Unmattavanti were openly discrediting the "sacred law".[165] It takes one's breath away to see the *brāhmanas* of a temple asking for a petty reward in lieu of the demolition of the temple by Harsa.[166] Co-operating and fraternizing with the transgressors of the 'sacred law' was a normal feature of the behaviour of the *brāhmanas*, and Kalhana, who regarded *brāhmanas* as 'gods', was exasperated at their ungodly role.[167]

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[158] Ibid., pp. 117, 196-97.

[159] Ibid., p. 117, 196-97.

[160] Ibid., p. 186.

[161] See Sayyid 'Ali (f. 3b) on how the Tantric *gurus* terrorised people by employing magic if they did not meet their fabulous demands.

[162] The administration of the Sultāns presents a meaningful contrast to that of the Hindu rajas, a glimpse of which has been given in this Chapter.

[163] *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, Vol. 1, p. 4.

Addiction to political power and a desire to appropriate more and more *agrahāras* corrupted the propriety of the *brāhmana* and plundered his faith. It not only made him insouciant, but a purchasable commodity, perfidy being no sin for him. The way the *brāhmanas* were easily purchased and the way they turned their coats frequently is graphically delineated by Kalhana while referring to their role during the reign of Queen Didda:

> With plenty of gold she [Didda] quickly bought off the Brahmans from Lalitadityapura and thus broke up the league of her enemies[168]... By presents of gold, she gained over Sumanomantaka and other Brahmans and then the fast ended. As soon as she had by her bribes warded off this great trouble, Vigraharaja's power was broken[169]... Vigraharaja, whose enmity was growing, again by secret emissaries caused the Brhamans to begin a solemn fast (*praya*). The Brhamans met again to hold a fast, (but) as they were willing to take bribes, Tunga, who had firmly established himself, got rid of them.[170]... Also Sumanomantaka and other Brahmans, who had [already] taken gold [from Didda but turned treacherous], were all caught and put into prison by Tunga[171]... Then the Brahman councillors in order to bring about the fall of Tunga, made the Brhamans and the Purohitas of sacred shrines start a solemn fast at Parihaspura[172]... Thereupon the Brhamans fled, and in fright

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[164] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 1088.

[165] Ibid., v. 403, 442.

[166] Ibid., vii. 1088.

[167] Ibid., v. 403, 442, vi. 336, viii. 68 sqq.

[168] Ibid., vi. 224.

[169] Ibid., vi. 339-340

[170] Ibid., vi. 343-344.

[171] Ibid., vi. 347.

[172] Ibid., vii. 13.

> betook themselves to the house of Rajakalasa, who has been their secret instigator.[173]

The following information supplied by al-Birūnī also points to the base avarice of Kashmiri *brāhmanas*:

> I have been told that the last mentioned author [Ugrabhuti, the author of *Sishyahitavavriti* – the book on grammar] was the teacher and instructor of Shāh Anandpala, ~~the son of~~ Jayapala, who ruled in our time. After having composed the book ~~he sent~~ it to Kashmir, but the people there did not adopt it, being in such things haughtily conservative. Now he complained of this to the Shāh and the Shāh in accordance with the duty of the pupil towards his master, promised to make him to attain his wish. So he gave orders to send 200,000 *dirhams* and presents of a similar value to Kashmir, to be distributed among those who studied the book of his master. The consequence was that they all rushed upon the book and would not copy any other grammar but this one, showing themselves in the baseness of their avarice. ~~The book became the fashion and highly prized.~~[174]

Given the fact that to the *brāhmanas* it was lust for power and wealth that life was all about, so it is not surprising to find them being lured by the material benefits coming to them on embracing Islam. To prove their unflinching loyalties to the Sultāns, many *brāhmanas* voluntarily opted for Islam and when later on patronage openly tilted in favour of the Muslims, many others could not resist their temptation for money and power and thus bargained away their religion. To quote Jonarāja:

> At the time when his [Sikandar's] dependents who belonged to the brāhmana and other castes forsook their caste, ambitious to obtain the favour of the king, Sbri Simha and Bhattakasthuta... and Shri Nirmala Charyyavaryya... deserved praise [for not embracing Islam in lieu of the king's favour].[175]

And when the *brāhmana* changed, a great barrier in the way of winning conversion was removed considering the influential position he enjoyed in the society.

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[173] Ibid., vii. 20.

[174] *Kitāb al-Hind* (Eng. tr. E. C. Sachau) Vol. 1, pp. 135-36.

[175] Jonarāja, pp. 60-61.

The mundane mentality not only made the *brāhmanas* prone to conversion, but it also eroded the faith of the general masses in them and thereby in the religion they represented. The non-materialistic life pattern of the Muslim preachers and their uncompromising zeal for their religion alienated the masses further from the *brāhmanas*. The Muslim preachers, who belonged to one or the other Sūfī order, were invariably otherworldly and primarily concerned with serving Islam for the pleasure of Allah. It was this concern that had made them take the trouble of coming all the way from Persia and Central Asia to Kashmir. Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn, the first known Muslim missionary, came to Kashmir not for any royal patronage, as Muslims did not rule Kashmir then. He was a dedicated missionary who was neither deterred by the unfavourable political circumstances of Kashmir nor by his old age.[176] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī was such a committed missionary of Islam that he undertook the missionary journey of Kashmir at a ripe age of seventy-two, trekking through the difficult and inhospitable terrain; and he left the Valley after completing his mission even though the Sultān of the time had requested him to take up his abode in Kashmir. To the Sayyid there was nothing more reprehensible than following worldly lusts and desires. He was the last man to compromise his mission for material gains. He unhesitantly expressed his unhappiness over the un-Islamic behaviour of the then reigning Sultān. In fact he left the Valley with displeasure over the reigning Sultān's reluctance to implement the *Shari'ah*.[177] According to Malik Haidar Chādura, the Sayyid was so averse to worldly pleasures that he declined to accept the servants and gifts presented to him by his followers, including the powerful noble Malik Daulat Chand, the ancestor of the chronicler.[178] Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī and his followers were so zealous missionaries that no material interests could lure them. Jonarāja was puzzled to observe their nonchalance for money. Though he hated the fervour of the missionaries, their indifference towards wealth had become such a known fact that he, too, was forced to make a mention of it, albeit curtly and with a purpose to underestimate it: "The *Yavanas*, who had accumulated wealth, were indifferent to the king's treasure, whether it was large or small".[179]

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[176] Although the Hindu *rajas* were favourably disposed towards the Muslims, the fact, however, remains that Muslim preachers could not dream of the same environment in a non-Muslim state as was available to them in the Muslim-ruled lands.

[177] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p.257; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.11ab; Haidar Malik, p. 43.

[178] Haidar Malik, op cit., p. 43.

[179] Jonarāja, p. 59.

It is true that a section of the so-called *'ulamā'* also became victim of worldly greeds;[180] however, the source of inspiration for the Muslims were not these *'ulamā'* but those dedicated missionaries at whose hands they or their parents had accepted Islam.[181] It is significant that the Sūfis like Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī had already warned the people against the worldly *'ulamā'* and the worldly Sūfis.[182] The negative impact of the worldly *'ulamā'* was also counteracted by a galaxy of celebrated saints like Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, his Rishi movement and a host of other Sūfis whose *khānaqāhs* acted as catalysts of the Islamic way of life. It was these preachers who constituted the 'reference group' of Islam, and the worldly *'ulamā'* became the butt of social ridicule. The self-abnegation and austere life of Shaikh Nūr al-Din is too well known to need any elaboration here. He had severed all links with the material world to the extent of not having a home and hearth, and not even eating green vegetables It is no wonder, then, that the people were attracted to him. Many embraced Islam at his hands, and those who were already converted or were the offspring of the converts considered him the real representative of Islam.[183] The other missionaries and Sūfis of the later period, like Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, Bābā Ismā'īl Kubrāvī and Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm did not shun the world but they showed no laxity, and thus they came to be revered to the extent of being deified by all those who had an opportunity to come closer to them.

Sūfis' Myriadmindedness

Besides being strict believers and ardent advocates of *zabt'i nafs* and social justice, another asset of the Sūfi missionaries that enhanced their prestige in the eyes of the public was their *'ilm* (knowledge) – of both religious and secular sciences. Referring to the crucial prerequisites needed for one to earn faith and following among the people, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī mainly underlines two conditions viz., knowledge (*'ilm*) and piety:

> The more one is adorned with *'ilm* (knowledge), *waqār* (modesty) and *parhezgāri* (piety) the more one can captivate the hearts of the people.[184]

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[180] *Kulliyāt-i Shaikh al-'Ālam*, Vol. I, pp. 117-120.

[181] It is interesting to note that whereas the Kashmiri Muslims have almost deified the Muslim saints, they have a very low opinion about the *'ulamā'*.

[182] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, p. 97.

[183] For details in this regard, see Bābā Nasīb, *Nūr-nāma*.

[184] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, p. 126.

While *mutaqī* and *perhezgār* are synonymous terms for denoting a Sūfī, what is worth noting is the fact that all the Sūfīs, who worked for conversion to Islam, were great scholars. As a matter of fact, in order to become a Shaikh learning was one of the basic requirements. Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn, the first known Sūfī missionary of Kashmir, was a great scholar of both *zāhirī* (exoteric) and *bātinī* (esoteric) *'ulum* (sciences) which he had learnt at the feet of the great Suhrawardī saint, Shāh Ni'matullah Fārsī, the distinguished disciple of Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī.[185] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī was a prolific and versatile writer. He is the author of at least one hundred works which, besides showing his command over Persian, Arabic and Islamic learning, indicate that he was equally good in logic, philosophy, ethics, jurisprudence, political science, sociology, psychology, medical sciences, science of physiognomy, prose and poetry and art of pleading and preaching.[186] Although his son Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī came to Kashmir at a young age of twenty-two, be was so mature a scholar that the two works he wrote in Kashmir – one on logic and the other on Sūfism – were mistaken for the compositions of Sayyid 'Ali by the *murīds* of the latter, so identical were they in depth and scholarship with the writings of his father.[187] And it was on account of his outstanding scholarship and piety that Sultān Sikandar, according to Jonarāja, "waited on him daily, humble as a servant, ... took his lessons from him ... and was attentive to him like a slave" because "although he [Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī] was a boy, he became their [*Yavanas*' i.e. Persian and Central Asian Sūfis] chief by learning."[188] The same is true of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, who, according to a contemporary Sanskrit chronicler, "knew all the sciences".[189]

The Sūfī-masters were not only sufficiently equipped with bookish knowledge in different subjects, they had practical knowledge of the rationale of human behaviour, human experience and social processes, as they had travelled widely and interacted with different peoples of different countries and of different backgrounds. Travelling (*siyāhat*), it may be mentioned, was considered both by the Suhrawardī and Kubrāvī *silsilas*, to

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185 *Baharistān-i Shāhī*, f. 7a; *Wāqi'āt-i Kashmir*, pp. 65-66.

186 For the works of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, see *Sūfism in Kashmir*, Appendix A; Sayyida Ashraf Zaffar, op. cit., pp. 194-316; Shamas al-Dīn Ahmad, *Shāh-i Hamdān: Hayāt aur Kārnamay*, op. cit.

187 Sayyid 'Ali, *Tārīkh-i Kashmir*, ff. 10b, 11a.

188 Jonarāja, p. 57.

189 Śuka, p. 339.

which the Sūfis of Kashmir mainly belonged, one of the most effective means of obtaining perfection in knowledge.[190] Thus like a true Suhrawardī, Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Bulbul Shāh had travelled extensively in Persia and Central Asia before he came to Kashmir.[191] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī spent almost his whole life in travelling. Before he came to Kashmir, he had visited many a time different places of Iran, Iraq, Turky, Arabia, Central Asia, China, Afghanistan and North-west Frontier of India.[192] It was during this *siyāhat* that he met about one thousand and four hundred Sūfi-masters besides other people.[193] About his extensive travels and repeated visits to places where he found changed socio-cultural environments between the intervals of his trips, he says:

سه بار از مغرب تا مشرق سفر کردم بس عجایب در بحر و بر دیده شد و هر بار که بشهری
و ولایتی رسیدم رسم و عادات اهل آن موضع طریقه دیگر دیدم

> I travelled [the world] thrice from the west to the east, and witnessed many a marval in land and sea. Each time I found that [marked] changes had occurred in the customs and mores of the people between the intervals of my visits to these places.[194]

Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī also commanded his son, Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī, by will that he should not preach unless he acquired adequate knowledge through undertaking extensive travel.[195] Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī had also travelled widely and lived in different environments before he entered Kashmir.[196] The same is true of other Sūfi missionaries whom we find continuously streaming into Kashmir. In short, it was their wide exposure coupled with their learning which accounted for the specticular success of these missionaries.

While the *'ilm 'i 'irfan* (spritual knowledge) cultivated among the Sūfis the ethical values and gave them the strength to subjugate *nafs* and "to yearn for nothing but to find an everlasting existence in the ocean of Divine Unity"[197]– the attributes which made them the most revered section of the society – the *zāhirī 'ulum* invested them with *hikmat* (wisdom) to understand human society and its functioning, an understanding which they utilized for making conversions. It was because of their theoretical and practical *'ilm* that they gave first preference to winning over the "reference group" (Sultāns, nobles and *gurus*) as they had learnt that the general public imitate the culture of their rulers,[198] the head of a tribe holds complete control over his tribesmen[199] and the common people simply follow their *gurus*.[200] It was also because of their knowledge and experience that they gave first preference to converting the people of *Shahr*, knowing that cities have always been the powerful catalysts of social change.[201] Their *'ilm* also guided them to approach differently the peoples of different backgrounds,[202] meet the demands of congruence and compatibility,[203] strengthen the institutional basis of Islam by opening mosques, *madrasas* and *khānaqāhs* for winning permanent and meaningful conversions and to preach and exemplify their point of view by quoting day to day examples.[204] It may not be beside the point to mention here that the *pīrs* were simultaneously *tabībs* (doctors) also, who had adequate knowledge of *tibb*. Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's writings indicate that besides being a spiritual doctor, he was perfectly well up in the science of medicine.[205] The knowledge of *'ilm-i tibb* helped the *pīrs* to bring their personalities to bear upon the people.[206]

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[190] For the importance attached to travelling by the Suhrawardī Sūfī masters, see Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *'Awārif al- Ma'arif* (Urdu tr.), pp. 164-172; and for the importance given to travelling by the Kubrāvīs, see *Khulāsat al- Manāqib*, f. 85a.

[191] *Wāqi'at-i Kashmir*, p. 65.

[192] For a glimpse of the visits of Sayyid 'Alī to these places, see *Khulāsat al- Manāqib*, ff. 11b, 14a, 63b, 67b, 72a, 75b, 76a, 92a, 93b, 94a.

[193] Ibid., f. 66a;

[194] Ibid., 86a.

[195] Sayyid 'Ali, *Tārīkh-i Kashmir*, f. 11a.

[196] For details, see *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, op. cit

While *siyāhat* was a vital ingredient of the *'ilm* of the Sūfis, the contrary was the case of Kashmiri religious class about whose insularity al-Birūni says tersely:

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[197] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, *Risala-i-Futuhiyya*, f. 257b.

[198] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, p. 195.

[199] Among the first followers won by Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī were some influential tribal heads of Kashmir. Cf. Sayyid 'Ali, f.9a.

[200] According to a contemporary work Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's first priority in the context of winning the people of Kashmir to Islam (after having made the reigning Sultān his *murīd*) was to convert the famous *rāhib* (hermit) of Srinagar. Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 3b, 4a.

[201] See supra, pp.58-59.

[202] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, p. 192.

[203] See, Khākī, *Rishi nāma*, p. 74.

[204] Cf. *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* although it was written at the behest of some rulers and nobles.

[205] Ibid., pp. 283-305.

[206] Of the mundane ills which the people expected the *pīrs* to cure and for which they flocked to them, see *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. II, p. 97.

> They know of no other country but India and of no other nations but themselves.[207]

Knowing little of the world beyond their own, the Kashmiri religious elite lacked intellectual curiosity except for learning and fostering mythology and philosophy. According to al-Birūni, "they mixed up [purely] scientific questions with religious traditions."[208]

Social Conflict and Conflict Resolution

> A society based on general consensus is likely to be a society of stable equilibrium. Conflict between different groups and segments or between their views on society as it is and as it should be builds up pressures and provides an impetus for change. Competition, pronounced value differences, deep cleavages of interests, wide inequalities and a sense of denial and injustice between different groups give rise to conflict. Action to resolve these differences leads to change.[209]

At the time Kashmir came face to face with Islam, Kashmiri society was stratified into many classes viz., the ruling class, *brāhmanas*, traders, *kāyasthas* (lower official bureaucracy), artisans, peasants and menial labourers. The *brāhmanas* commanded the highest social position. Next came *kshatriyas* followed by *vaiśyas* and *śudras*. The outcastes stood at the lowest rung of the ladder.

For various reasons, which we shall outline below, the relations between these classes/ groups were not cordial. And what is strikingly observable is that there was not only antagonism between the classes and groups but a given class and group was not also an undifferentiated segment having amicable relations with one another. The inter-group rivalry was more conspicuous among the dominating sections of the society. Each of them was divided into different racial and occupational groups and each group had an ingrained lust to topple the other.[210]

a) Class Antagonism

From Kalhana's *Rājatarangini* and a brief account supplied by Jonarāja we find that the ruling class of Kashmir was a heterogeneous body composed of different social and interest groups. Besides the

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[207] Al-Birūni, *Kitāb al-Hind*, (tr. Sachu) II, p. 178.

[208] Ibid., Vol. I. p. 39.

[209] S. C. Dube, *Understanding Change: Anthropologiocal and Sociological Perspectives*, p. 60.

[210] See *Rājatarangini*, Books vii and viii.

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racially divided ruling tribes, namely, Damaras, Ekangas, Tantrians and Lavanyas,[211] *kshatriyas* and *brāhmanas* were also divided among different interest groups. Because of the limited resources of the country and also because of the over ambition of each group to grab more and more power and revenues of the country by having their own men installed on the throne, there was constant inter-group rivalry.[212] The tussle assumed an alarming proportion from the later Karkota rule[213] when the country faced a serious economic crunch[214] owing to the continuous civil wars, squander mania of the rulers[215] and also because of the surrender of large revenues to religious institutions and personages.[216] The crisis deepend following the fall of the S'āhī kingdom of Kabul, capture of Kashmiri throne by Loharas and also because of the increasing threat of Muslim incursions.

After the S'āhī kingdom fell to the armies of Mahmud of Ghazni, there was a large influx of people belonging to the ruling section of the erstwhile kingdom,[217] as Kashmiri rulers had very intimate relations with the vanquished dynasty.[218] The aspirants for royal patronage, therefore, swelled as we find S'āhis being given important positions in the administration to the resentment of Kashmiri nobility.[219] The transfer of Kashmiri throne to a royal family of Lohorin (Punch) in 1008, which ruled till the foundation of the Muslim Sultanate, resulted in another stream of immigration from Lohorin. And those who were encouraged to settle in the Valley mostly belonged to the ruling class.[220] Thus the number of those who aspired to become *samantas* had increased beyond the proportion of the available resources. There was no other alternative except to confiscate or curtail the land grants of the old ruling class to accommodate the new aspirants who were nearer to the throne.[221]

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[211] Ibid

[212] Ibid

[213] Ibid

[214] For a serious economic crisis forcing the rulers to take even the "cultivator's share", to revoke or drastically curtail the *agrahāra* grants, to plunder the temples, to impose as many as twelve kinds of corvee, to levy tax even on night soil, to pawn the throne and to raise loans from rich people, see *Rājataranginī*, iv. 628, 638-39; v.166-170, 174, 266; vii. 43, 106, 195, 367, 570, 696, 1090-96, 1107; viii. 2226.

[215] For the enormous amount spent on unproductive sectors like construction of temples and importing luxurious goods, see *Rājataranginī*, iv. 193-211, 310, 622-69; vii. 190-95, 520-21, 963; viii. 73-80, 2400-2411.

[216] Ibid., iv. 187. sqq; v. 23, 24, 48-52, 170-403, 442; vi. 89, 306; vii. 121, 182, 184, 526, 608, 952; viii. 2395, 2443. According to *Lokaprakāśa* there were one thousand temples in each *Vaiśya* (district). A vaiśya comprised seventy-five villages. *Lokaprakāśa*, p. 59. (Vide *Kashmir Polity*, op.cit., p. 160).

[217] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 144-152, 178-274.

[218] For the matrimonial relations between the S'ahis and the Loharas, see Ibid., vi. 177-78; vii. 103, 1470; viii 227.

[219] Ibid., vii. 144-152.

The increasing threat of Muslim conquest, which became inevitable with the fall of S'āhī kingdom of Kabul and the Rajput kingdoms of northern India, further burdened the feeble economy of Kashmir. It necessitated preferential attention to updating cavalary. As a result, war-horses began to be imported in considerable numbers.[222] To further strengthen the defence sector, the rulers extended patronage to *Turuska* (Muslim) warriors, expert in advanced warfare, to settle in the Valley.[223] The result was that a large number of Muslims and others immigrated to Kashmir and were appointed to high positions.[224] However, the resources of the State did not increase simultaneously, instead, the graph of the country's economy was sliding in a downward curve on account of continuous civil wars, lack of powerful central authority and the sluggishness in trading activities with neighbouring lands after their occupation by the Muslims.[225] Balance of trade was in favour of imports and the external trade was mainly in the hands of foreign merchants.[226] The import of horses which almost devoured the economy of Kashmir was monopolized by the foreign horse dealers.[227]

The economic crisis gave birth to many problems which ultimately went in favour of Islam. To meet the growing economic crisis we find many rulers revoking *agrahāras*[228] and imposing taxes on the *brāhmanas*,[229] which according to the Brāhmanical canons was one of the greatest sins to be imagined from a Hindu.[230] Not satisfied with this, some rulers even desecrated temples to obtain gold.[231] Not

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220 Ibid., vii. 703, 706, 738, 775, 779, 780, 1040; viii. 769, 1047, 1227, 1832.

221 Ibid., viii 706. 1047.

222 Ibid., viii, 73. 493.

223 See Chapter II.

224 Ibid.

225 *Kitāb al-Hind*, (tr. E. C. Sachau)I, p. 206.

226 *Rājatarangini*, viii. 493.

227 Ibid.

228 Ibid., v. 166-70; vii. 43, 106, 570; viii. 2224-2226.

229 Jonarāja, p. 16.

230 *Śaivagamas*, op.cit., p. 68.

231 *Rājatarangini*, v. 167-71; vii. 696. 109096, 1344.

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only profane Harsa but even Samkaravarman, who according to Jayanta Bhatta was the "preceptor of the tradition of *Varnāśramadharma,*"[232] plundered numerous temples.[233] These extreme steps were taken when even after rack-renting to the extent of taking even the cultivator's share[234] and imposing tax on night soil[235] could not help the rulers to meet their financial demands. Some rulers even pawned their crowns,[236] borrowed money from traders and landlords[237] and dismissed *kāyasthas.*[238]

While on the one hand the economic crisis culminated in disregard of religion, it simultaneously enfeebled the central authority and antagonized the councillors, land owning-cum-ruling tribes, officials, revenue grantees and above all the working classes.

Unable to maintain sufficient army and a costly state apparatus, the central control loosened and the land-owning tribes who controlled the *vaiśyas* (districts) refused to pay revenue, and we find the rulers like Harsa massacring the landlords (*dāmaras*).[239]These steps only antagonized the powerful tribal leaders who were too strong to be subdued by the weak centre. The councillors were also left a disaffected lot as the fragile resources at the disposal of the centre did not satisfy their gigantic appetite for money and wealth. Thus there was nothing but disaffection and the consequent struggle for power among the different factions of nobility, which threw them in the lap of the Muslim rulers of the neighbouring territories either to seek refuge or to seek their active support against their opponents in the Valley.[240] The result was that the dominating section of Kashmiri society got assimilated into Islam consequent upon their close association with the Muslims.[241] Secondly, the Muslims got an opportunity to extend their sphere of influence in the Valley, creating a quite favourable climate for adventurous Muslims and missionaries to enter Kashmir, settle down comfortably and preach their faith.[242]

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[232] Vide *Kashmir Polity*, p. 60.

[233] *Rājataranginī*, v. 167-70.

[234] Ibid., iv. 628.

[235] Ibid., vii 1107.

[236] Ibid., vii. 194-195.

[237] Ibid., v. 266; vii. 367.

[238] Ibid., viii 87 sqq.

[239] Ibid., vii. 1227-1232.

[240] Ibid.

[241] Ibid.

[242] See Chapter II, pp. 48-53

In the struggle for survival many well-to-do families and tribes lost their prominence. For example, even the names of one time king-makers like Ekangas and Tantrians do not figure in post-Kalhana chronicles.[243] More strange is the fact that even the more dreaded and well-established tribe of Dāmaras also seems to have submerged in the deep sea of crises.[244] The old official class was thrown out of employment. The officials gave highest biddings to get jobs by ousting one another.[245] Thus not only those families and tribes that had lost their traditional positions and those who were groaning under the misrule, yearned for a downfall of the existing political establishment, but even those few who enjoyed some prosperity were not satisfied with the existing state of affairs, where positions changed hands in the twinkle of an eye.[246] The ruler the people aspired for was not probably the one among those whom they tested for a pretty long time; and also not the one with the faith that only cared for the interests of a microscopic minority. Probably they had eyes upon the Muslims, who had by then emerged as the greatest political power with great advancement in technology, and who had an attractive social programme, and with whom they had had a long association both inside and outside the country. This is the reason that they welcomed Shāh Mīr as their ruler, regardless of religious considerations.

The Mongal invasion of 1320 drew the last nail in the coffin of Kashmir's ramshackle economy. While the whole country suffered devastation in the wake of this invasion, the already impoverished ruling class was hard hit as it lost its men and material – the basis of its power.[247] When Rinchana, a Ladakhi Buddhist, assumed the throne of

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[243] The only notable tribe that seems to have maintained its position since the days of Kalhana is the Lavanya tribe as Jonarāja refers to only this tribe as a power to reckon with. Jonarāja, pp. 9, 19, 24, 27, 31, 32. Ekangas and Tantrians are not mentioned at all by the post -Kalhana chroniclers.

[244] Contrary to the repeated mention of Lavanyas by Jonarāja, we just find an incidental mention of a Damara noble during the reign of Qutub al-Dīn. Ibid., p. 48.

[245] *Rājataranginī*, v. 265.

[246] The Lohara rule presents a sad story of the quick rise and fall of the rulers and those of their supporters. See *Rājataranginī*, viii. 706-10 for how the political insecurity led to chaotic conditions affecting the whole populace.

[247] In A.D. 1320 Kashmir was subjected to a Mongol invasion led by one variously named as Zulju and Dalacha. The Mongol army which according to Jonarāja consisted of sixty thousand mounted force ravaged the Valley for eight months. For the destruction caused by this Mongol invasion, see Jonarāja, pp.17-18; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 5ab; Haidar Malik, pp. 35.

Kashmir after the chaotic conditions created by the Mongal invasion,[248] the aspirants for positions in the state apparatus had no other alternative but to show loyalty to the ruler, who had emerged as the strongest power of the time. Since Rinchana embraced Islam immediately after he assumed power, the best demonstration of their fidelity to him was to identify themselves with him in religious faith too. Thus the process of embracing Islam by the ruling elite that was already set in motion crystallized with the capture of power by the Muslims. The noble family of Chandan, which had its stronghold at Lar for centuries together, was the first to embrace Islam. Although Rinchana had murdered Ramachandra, the then head of the tribe, his son, Rawanchandra who was appointed by Rinchana as his commander-in-chief (and who had been given the most covetous title – Raina), also embraced Islam along with the king.[249] Rinchana then married his sister, Kota Rani.[250] That Rawanchandra and Kota Rani compromised with the murder of their father and became the family members of Rinchana is suggestive of the life preferences of the ruling class. With the establishment of the Sultanate in 1339, the trend of embracing the religion of the ruler increased, though for a long time the rulers showed no zeal in converting people to Islam and the non-Muslims formed the core group of the ruling class. Seeing that Shāh Mīr had enough strength to become the ruler of Kashmir, the local noble families of Kashmir entered into matrimonial relations with him even though he was only a noble then.[251] The Hindu *samantas* (chieftains) to do so were the 'lord of Bhāngila, Lord of Kota' and the most turbulent landed tribe, Lavanyas.[252] Since the most powerful tribes were generally holding the charge of *vaiśyas* (medieval *parganas*) the lords mentioned here were understandably tribal heads. That these lords showed no reservations in giving their daughters to Shāh Mīr and his sons, but felt elated in so doing indicates that they too probably had embraced Islam. This is substantiated by the fact that besides Chandan, we find that Māgreys and Dāmaras had embraced Islam much before the arrival of

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[248] Ibid., For Rinchana's rise to power and other developments of his reign, see *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op.cit.., pp. 36-41.

[249] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.7b; Haidar Malik, p.36.

[250] Ibid., f. 6a.

[251] Jonarāja, pp. 26-27.

[252] Ibid. Bāngila of Sanskrit choroniclers and Bāngil of Persian writers was a *vaiśya* (*pargana*) situated to south-west of Paraspōr (modern Parihaspūr) (*Rājataranginī*, vii. 498n.) Kotta is an abbreviated form of Lohara-kotta (M.A.Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol.II, p.297 n.33).

Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī.[253] Probably the only ruling class which did not get converted till the very late were the *brāhmana* and *kshatriya* councillors. That is why Sultān Qutub al-Dīn expressed his inability to implement *Shari'ah*, as desired by Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī.[254] Things, however, changed when a vigorous movement of conversion was started by the followers of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, particularly his son Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī. The conversion tendency among the remaining members of the ruling class picked up with the preferential treatment the state gave to Islam after being influenced by the *Shariah*-conscious missionaries.

The ruling tribes who took initiative in embracing Islam were for a long time in a process of conversion. These tribes which constituted the hereditary land-owning class of Kashmir did not belong to either *brāhmana* or *kshatriya* caste. Therefore, they were looked down upon by the higher castes.[255] While the contemptuous attitude of the upper castes against these tribes was sufficient to take their hearts out of Brāhmanism, the heterodox movement and the increasing influence of Islam encouraged them to defy the faith openly. Thus while referring to the matrimonial relations between Shāh Mīr and the Lavanyas, Jonarāja calls the latter 'irreligious',[256] meaning thereby that they had no regard for Brāhmanism. That the Lavanyas had disregarded the Brāhmanic faith long before in the eleventh century is substantiated by Kalhana, who says that the Lavanyas enjoyed 'cow's meat' at the hands of the *mlecchas* in some Muslim-ruled neighbourhood, where they had fled to escape from the wrath of Harsa.[257] It was not only with the ruling families of the lower castes that faith in Brāhmanism hung by their eyelids, we find the upper caste councillors too with a feeble faith.

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[253] For the extraordinary importance which the head of the Māgrey tribe received from Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, see Sayyid 'Ali, op.cit., ff. 7b,8ab; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.11b. That the *Dāmaras* had also accepted Islam immediately after the foundation of the Sultanate is alluded to by an incidental remark of Jonarāja, who refers to a Muslim Dāmara during the reign of Sultān Qutub al-Dīn (1373-1391): "The stones discharged by the enemy covered the Dāmara Lolaka, so that he was not deprived of burial, the last rite of the Yavanas". Jonarāja, p. 48.

[254] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p.257; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.11b; Haidar Malik, p.43.

[255] Kalhana makes it clear that the 'feudal barons' of Kashmir were neither *brāhmanas* nor *kshatriyas* by caste (*Rājataranginī*, viii. 2334-2337). Jonarāja calls Lavanyas irreligious (Jonarāja, p. 27). For the contempt shown by the *brāhmanas* against the powerful landowning tribes whom Kalhana sometimes calls by a generic term *dāmara*, see *Rājataranginī*, viii. 7, 14, 39, 856, 968, 1057, 1734.

[256] Jonarāja, p. 27.

[257] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 1231, 1232.

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Udaysheri's counselling to Shihāb al-Dīn to demolish temples for obtaining gold is a case in point.[258]

The ruling class's entry into Islam was further prompted by the prolonged animosity between the *brāhmanas* and the land-owning tribes and between the *brāhmana purohitas* and the ministers. The *brāhmanas* were never prepared to see the growing power of the landed aristocracy and the ministers as it militated against their vested interests as *agrahāra* holders. The antagonistic relations between the *brāhmanas* and the landlord tribes, and the pressure the former used to build on the rulers to curb the growing power of the latter (who revoked *agrahāras* or curtailed them, once they wielded power in any area), is borne out by the following ructions of Kalhana, who here represents the *brāhmana* cause against the 'feudal barons' *(dāmaras)* whom he contemptuously calls *dasyu* (robbers):

> Trillaka, who was the gathering place for all robbers (*dasyu*, i.e. dāmaras), just as the pit is for the owls, consumption for diseases, hell for the demons, and the ocean for the sea-monsters, – he great in deceit got the prefect of the *Devasarasa*, [district Devsar] over to his side and raised a rebellion. Thereupon the Brāhmanas [of that district], anxious to preserve their lands and wishing his suppression, held a solemn fast (*praya*) at Vijayesvara, directed against the king. They did not accept the representation of the king who did not think this the right time for uprooting the dāmaras (*dasyu*), whereupon he, from kind consideration, fell in with [the desire of] their assembly[259]... The fortunate king then started for Madavarajya, which had thus been delivered of one enemy, to please the Brāhmans. The king dismissed from his presence the minister Alamkara upon the petition of the Brāhmans who had been excited against the latter by [other] ministers.... He had always exerted himself in bringing the dāmaras (*dasyu*) to terms when they were in evil plight, and hence he appeared to his jealous [colleagues] like a promoter of the former's ill deeds. The king induced the Brahmans to give up their fast by the promise that he would uproot Trillaka after he had disposed of the pretenders to the crown.[260]

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[258] Supra. P112.

[259] *Rājataranginī*, viii 2731.

[260] Ibid. 2736-2737, 2739.

Elsewhere, we have given some illustrative examples to show how the *brāhmana purohitas* misused their power to make and unmake the kings and ministers to suit their personal interests, which resultantly soured the relations between them.[261]

The *brāhmana* community was also divided into different classes. Broadly speaking, there were four classes of *brāhmanas*: councillors, *purohitas*, *kāyasthas* and common *brāhmanas*,[262] each at variance with the others. Kalhana showing scant respect for 'ordinary *brāhmanas*' who held *mathagrahāras* and constituted the *purohita* corporations,[263] believes that the highly educated *brāhmana* class (to which he himself belonged) were distinct from other *brāhmanas* and that they alone could aspire to become councillors and kings.[264] Referring to the marriage of King Samgramarja's daughter with the superintendent of the Diddamatha, Kalhana castigates the king for misalliance and brings out a very low opinion the upper class *brāhmanas* had for other members of the community even if they "possessed wealth, courage and other good qualities".[265]

> How could his [Samgramaraja's] timed nature be still more completely illustrated? He allowed his royal dignity to be lowered by unequal matrimonial relations... How [great is the distance] between a princess fit for a king who is bent on universal conquest and a Brahman of a small mind whose hand is wet with the water of presents?[266]

While representing the *brāhmana* councillors, being himself the son of a *brāhmana* minister, Kalhana frequently gives vent to the deep-seated resentment this class had borne against the *brāhmana purohitas* for their interference in politics and assumption of masterly role, which sometimes overshadowed even the *brāhmana* ministers. The following remarks of Kalhana show the rancour the *brāhmana* ministers and the *brāhmana purohitas* had against one another for their tussle to become real masters of the land:

> They [*purohitas*] urged [before the king]: 'Your ministers show indifference in the fighting. Take from them hostages

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[261] Supra, pp.159-163.

[262] *Rājatarangini*, v. 424 sqq., 465; vii. 13 sqq., 91, 204, 295, 1105, 1319; viii 898 sqq., 1345, 2383.

[263] Ibid., v. 465 sqq., vii, 12. 13 sqq; viii, 901 sqq., 939 sqq.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid., vii., pp.11-12.

[266] Ibid.

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> and send them to the hill of Lohara'[267]... Then these villainous Brāhmans by their supplications induced the king to do confused acts[268].... Like another hostile army there grew to power by his side a throng composed of office employees, violent *purohitas* of sacred places and the like. By the manifold mistakes, which arose during the endeavour to conciliate them, the country fell into complete confusion and plundering became excessive. These wretches who had never [before] seen the king's assembly, and who knew nothing of affairs, used harsh words of various kinds towards the unfortunate king when he tried to appease them. Worse than the Lavanya rebellion was this rebellion against the king, just as a disease of the throat pains more than one of the foot.[269]

Kalhana also represents the general cause of that section of the *brāhmanas* who enjoyed *agrahāras*, whether big or small, and who were neither willing to lose a bit of it, nor to pay any tax. He thus lifts a curtain over the damned relations between the *brāhmana agrahāra* holders and the *kāyasthas* (who were mostly *brāhmanas*) for the latter's persistent efforts to provoke the rulers to revoke or curtail the *agrahāra* grants or to impose taxes on the *brāhmanas*.[270] Besides, the *kāyasthas* were notorious for their rapacious character which afflicted the *agrahāra* grantees too.[271]

Those *brāhmanas* who were neither councillors nor *purohitas* or *kāyasthas* but formed a segment of the common people could not be understandably happy with either of the superior groups of their community, not only because the *agrahāras* were solely monopolized by them, but because along with other people a common *brāhmana* faced the brunt of the misdoings and misuse of power by the rulers and their collaborators who systematically combined to fleece the people. They were loyal to one another forming a powerful ring of iron inside which the tax-payer lay silenced: "He [Yasaskara] amassed riches through four city prefects (*nagarādhikrta*), who helped themselves in turn to money, and were hanging about each other's back."[272] What is more, they used all fraudulent means to perpetuate their positions on hereditary basis. Thus the superior groups not only claimed to be "pure *brāhmanas*"[273] but also offered big bribes to retain their positions.[274]

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[267] Ibid., viii., 769.

[268] Ibid., 772

[269] Ibid., 773-776.

[270] *Narmamālā*, pp. 4-5; *Rājataranginī*, iv. 620 sqq; v. 180, 439; vii. 149, 1226; viii 53, 85 sqq, 560 sqq.

[271] Ibid

[272] Ibid., vi 70.

The mutual relations of the officials (*kāyasthas*), too, were riven by their vested interests. While there was an inherent weakness in their ranks to embezzle revenues and to resort to bribes, each official, however, wanted to appropriate either a lion's share of it or not to part with it at all with his superiors or subordinates as the case would be.[275] There was also a great tussle among the officials for lucrative posts or for promotion out of way for which they resorted to all means of wangling.[276] Since in comparison to the available positions, the number of aspirants was enormous, there was a continuous tussle among the officials to oust each other by offering greater and greater bribes.[277] According to Kalhana, the unemployed *kāyasthas* were so much frustrated, and the *kāyastha* class as a whole had so much vested interest in monopolizing lucrative positions that "Some in order to get employment made even their mother, sister, daughter and wife offer their person to men of noble rank".[278]

The most discontented lot, however, were common people who were coerced by the state, the *sāmantas*, the *ograhāra*-holders and the *kāyasthas*. How the peasants and other working classes were plundered by the state through its officials (*kāyasthas*), we have profuse evidence from Kalhana and Ksemendra. Here Kalhana is referring to the rapacity of the *kāyasthas*:

> Indeed the officials (*kāyasthas*) also are plagues for the people, and not only cholera, colic, and exhaustion, rapidly destroying everybody. The crab kills its father, and the white ant destroys her mother, but the ungrateful *kāyastha*, when he has become powerful, destroys everything.[279]

Deśopadeśa and *Narmamālā* describe at length the depredation caused by the *kāyasthas* like *Grihakrityādhipati*, *Nirguta*, *Bhatta-divira* and their soldiers when they visited the villages and forcibly took away bamboo cots, copper vessels and other belongings of the villagers.[280] Ksemendra depicts the *Grihakrityādhipati* "as a tall fat person standing motionless with his eyes raised up. He wears a yellow turban. He is proud, false, merciless and voracious. He frightens the villagers and their urchins and leaves the rural maidens in Eve's dress. He is the cause of Brāhmanicide, cow-slaughter and other heinous crimes as patricide".[281]

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[273] Ibid., i, 307, 312-16.

[274] Ibid., v.265.

[275] Ibid., iv. 629-30; v. 265. See also Ibid., viii 85-109 for the stern steps taken by Uccala (1101-11) against the *kāyasthas* for having looted the property of the state and the subjects.

[276] For the base wangling of the *kāyasthas*, see *Rājataranginī*, viii. 102.

[277] Ibid., v. 265.

[278] Ibid., viii. 102.

[279] Ibid., viii. 88-89.

So, where on the one hand different upper classes and groups were at war with one another, each avidly waiting to see the downfall of the other, the common man yearned for the fall of those of all above him. The foundation of the Muslim Sultanate provided him an occasion to give expression to his deeprooted resentment against his exploiters. He welcomed the Muslim rulers and embraced their faith in the hope of getting rid of the traditional *kāyasthas*, besides avenging his deeply embedded antipathy against the rapacious state. There was also a strong attraction for the common man to accept the new faith as its propagators strongly voiced their concern for ameliorating the condition of the poor and oppressed, besides regarding those who preferred poverty to worldly allurements as the highest in the eyes of God.[282] By highlighting the Islamic ideals of social justice in their preachings and writings, the Muslim preachers were not only doing their religious duty but they also knew that the common man would be won over to Islam mainly if they solved his basic problem. So the preachers readily took up his cause which was consciously brought to their notice by the oppressed who were aware of the influential position of the preacher in the corridors of power. That the preachers won the common people to their side by getting their economic problems solved, is borne out by a brief but illustrative statement of Sayyid 'Ali, who makes it in the context of the circumstances that accounted for the success of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī as a missionary:

> The peasants of Hanjivir who suffered untold miseries owing to state exploitation approached him [Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī] for getting some relief. Also, some sturdy people sought his help for getting employment. In this way many people entered into his fold.[283]

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280 *Desopadesa*, viii i and ii; iii 46-53, 197 sqq. (Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, op.cit., p.204)

281 *Narmamālā-Desopadesa*, I, 69; I, 70 (Vide *Kashmir Polity*, op.cit., p.168).

282 For the concern which the Muslim preachers showed for the poor, see *Dhakhirat al-Mulūk*, Vol.I, pp. 110-171; and for having a high opinion about the poor, see Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, *Risala-i-M'arifat-i Zuhd*, f. 11a. Also, see *Kulliyāt*, p. 46.

283 Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 24b-25a

We find even Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn taking an officer to task for oppressing the peasants of a village.[284] As a matter of fact, it was a common practice with the people to approach the saints for writing letters of recommendation to the rulers for redressing their grievances. Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī considers it a religious duty for all those who wield power/influence to make recommendations to meet the ends of justice and to solve the problems of the people. In support of this he quotes a *Hadith*: "The Prophet said that no *sadāqa* (a sacrifice for pious uses) is more excellent (*afzal*) than the *sadāqa* of tongue (*zabān*). On being asked its meaning, the Prophet replied 'It means, that kind of recommendation which would prevent shedding blood, help provide benefit to the people and stop one from wickedness'."[285] In spite of Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm's strong reservation against exercising his influence on the rulers of his time, he was made to write letters of recommendation by his disciples;[286] and according to Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, it was one of the main motivations that attracted the people to him.[287]

Probably impressed by the preachings of the Muslim saints, the Sultāns considerably relieved the working classes from the age-old oppression. Thus whereas in the *Rājataranginī* of Kalhana one finds recurrent mention of *kāyasthas* as oppressors, there is no mention of them in our contemporary works, not in the slightest in the *Rājtaranginīs* of Jonarāja, Śrivara and Śuka, though usually they follow the pattern set forth by their illustrious predecessor, Kalhana. This is suggestive of the fact that during the Sultāns the *kāyasthas* lost the position and role they once enjoyed, forcing Kalbana to mention them time and again[288] in his otherwise the narrative of kings. The Sultāns also seem to have abolished the thirteen kinds of corvee and the employment of forces for exaction of revenues.[289] Unlike the previous rulers who would sometime even take the peasant's share,[290] the Sultāns taxed the land very lightly at the rate of one-sixth for a considerable time till the condition of the people improved.[291] Later on it was raised to one-third, which remained the normal land revenue till the end of the Sultanate,[292] though in the neighbouring Muslim-ruled lands it was not less than one-half.[293] The rain-fed crops were taxed still lighter; and the newly cultivated lands were nominally taxed.[294] As a matter of fact, the Sultāns were not as extravagant as we find the rulers preceding them,[295] the brunt of which was ultimately faced by the working classes. Seeing the just administration of the converted ruler, Rinchana, the people, according to Jonarāja exclaimed with joy that "the golden age had returned."[296] And Shāh Mīr "assuaged the troubles of Kashmira and changed its conditions".[297]

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[284] Bābā Nasīb, *Nūr-nāma*, f. 192b.

[285] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, p. 196.

[286] *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 384b.

[287] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, II. p. 97.

[288] *Rājatarangini*, iv. 90, 621, 629; vii. 1226; viii. 85-114, 131.

[289] For the imposition of thirteen kinds of forced labour during the Hindu rajas, see *Rājatarangini*, v. 174; and for pressing the army into service for collecting land revenue, see *Desopadesa* VIII. I and II.

[290] *Rājatarangini*. iv. 628.

[291] *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, II (text) p. 374; *Tabaqāt-i Akbarī* (text), p. 597.

The Sultāns also showed considerable interest in improving the technology. They introduced almost all those technologies, which had long been in use in the advanced civilizations of the time but in which the pre-Sultanate rulers had shown no interest.[298] Consequent upon the steps taken by the Sultāns to improve the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, Kashmir became not only self sufficient in food-stuffs[299] but it also turned out to be a world-famous centre of extraordinary crafts.[300] This striking prosperity of Kashmir puzzled all

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[292] Ibid.

[293] Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I, pp.61-67, 235.

[294] *Akbar-nāma*, III (text), p. 548. The land that was newly brought under cultivation was taxed at the rate of one-seventh. Śrivara, p. 156.

[295] For example, unlike Lalitaditya (*Rājatarangiṇī*, iv. 192 sqq.) we find no Sultān building countless religious places and using gold and silver in their construction besides bestowing large land grants on each of them. So is there no Sultān like Ananta, who exhausted his treasury by his extravagant activities to the extent that he had to pawn his throne to a betel merchant (Ibid., vii. 194-95). Neither do we find any one of them like Harsa whose squandering mania forced him to impose tax even upon night soil (Ibid., vii. 1107). Also, we do not find the Sultāns having seraglios teeming with queens and concubines whose number would sometimes run into hundreds as was the case with the Hindu rajas. See Ibid., iv. 207, 310, 396, 466, 661 sqq, 678; v. 361-387, 444; vi. 74, 88; vii. 521, 858, 963, 1142, 1389). Nor do we find them bestowing cows, horses, gold and other gifts upon religious personages and *asthāpanas* as was done by the Hindu rajas (Ibid., viii. 76, 244, 495).

[296] Jonarāja, p. 20.

[297] Ibid., p. 32.

[298] For a glimpse of the introduction of new technology into Kashmir during the Sultāns, see my article, "Modes of Technology and Culture Transmission from Central Asia to Kashmir," in B. K. Deambi (ed.), *Kashmir and Central Asia*, pp.61-74.

[299] Cf. Father Jerome Xavier, JASB, NS. XXIII, 1927, No. I.

[300] Tarikh-i Rashidī (tr. Elias and Ross), p. 434; *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, II, (tr. Jarrett), p. 350.

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those who visited Kashmir during or after the Sultāns, as such progress was not achieved by any country that bordered it except Samarqand and Bukhārā.[301] These changes were surely of a revolutionary character to a medieval worker, who otherwise understood the state simply as an awe-inspiring authority of coercion.

b) *Caste Antagonism*

There is no gainsaying the fact that *Varnāśramadharma* was not strictly followed in Kashmir, as occupational mobility – both vertical and horizontal – was not inconceivable there, and except *dombas* and *ćandālas* the other *varnas* and castes were not regarded as "impure."[302] The fact remains that the *brāhmanas*, the protagonists of Brāhmanism, were leaving no stone unturned to enforce *varna* system in its strict jurdicial sense. To them only those kings were Śiva-incarnate who would not allow any deviation in this regard. Any deviation from it was considered civilisational downfall – *Kāli yuga*.[303] The reasons why they wanted *Varnāśramadharma* to obtain both in letter and spirit are understandable. After all, the *varna* system gave the *brāhmanas* a superior position – superior to all other *varnas* – by reserving all privileges for them. It not only perpetuated the abject condition of the masses by closing doors for them to improve their status but, what is

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[301] Ibid.

[302] The nature of *Varnāśramadharma* in Kashmir is a subject of interesting controversy. S. C. Ray opines that in Kashmir there were neither such castes as *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śudra* nor intermediary castes between the *brāhmanas* or other lower castes as we find in other parts (S. C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 86). This contention has been convincingly refuted by Krishna Mohan, who on the authority of Kalhana not only refers to the existence of *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śudras*, but also sixty-four intermediary castes (Krishna Mohan, *Early Medieval History of Kashmir*, pp.211-12). The existence of intermediary castes between different castes can be further substantiated by the division of the existing Pandit community of Kashmir into different *gotras*, which form endogamous groups.

While there is no denying the fact that Kashmiri society was divided into four castes plus outcastes like *dombās*, *ćandālās*, etc., it is, however, true that there was no strict adherence to the four-fold classification and caste segregation in practice, as we find occasionally low castes occupying high positions (*Rājataranginī*, v. 390 sqq; vii. 39-41, 203, 207-8, 285-291), high castes marrying low castes (Ibid., v. 361-67) and only *dombās* and *ćandālas* being considered impure (Ibid, v. 402). Though not a rule, it alludes to considerable laxity in caste system. Probably this phenomenon can be attributed to the influence of Tantricism according to which caste system was blasphemous (Śivāgamas, op.cit., pp.149, 162, 182-83). The influence of Buddhism and Islam together with the infiltration of diverse ethnic groups, might have acted as powerful contributory factors to take the edge of the caste system.

[303] This is the refrain of Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*. *Rājataranginī*, i. 51; vi. 117, 179, 312-316, 339-345; ii. 13.

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more, on account of the *varna* system the whole financial burden was to be borne by the lower castes. They had to till the *agrahāra* land,[304] work as 'serfs' of *brāhmanas*,[305] and to bear the whole expenses of the state as the *brāhmanas* were exempted from all taxes[306] including corvee (*rudhabhārodhi*).[307] Besides, it was only non-*brāhmanas* who were liable for capital punishment, while the *brāhmanas* were totally exonerated even if proved guilty.[308] To crown it all, the *varna* system made only the *brāhmanas* eligible to receive the fabulous gifts, which the kings used to distribute to please gods.[309] Thus it was no accident to find *brāhmanas* hellbent on trying to tighten the screws of caste system; and it is also no surprise that the lower castes called into question the authority of the *brāhmanas* and the religion propounded by them.

The *brāhmanas* of Kalhana's stock looked down upon even the *brāhmana purohitas* and those who had not come from *Aryadeśa*[310] He is unsparing in his denunciations to Samgramraja for giving his daughter in marriage to the superintendent of Diddamatha, "a *brāhmana* of a small mind whose hands are wet with the water of presents,"[311] though he himself says that the superintendent was very rich, brave and possessed many other qualities.[312] He calls the *brāhmana purohitas* wicked-minded and impure.[313] The *brāhmanas* who came from Gandhara and settled in Kashmir during the reign of Miharkula were 'lowest of the twice-born'.[314]

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[304] See *Rājatarangini*, v. 167, 170, for transferring of land revenue of the villages together with their inhabitants to the temples. See also Jan Yun-Hue, *Hui Chao's Record on Kashmir*. Vide, *Kashmir Research Biannual*, No. 2 (1962), pp. 119-120.

[305] Ibid.

[306] Imposing tax upon *brāhmanas* was considered a sacrilegious act. However, if, at any critical time, taxing the *brāhmanas* became unaviodable, it caused great commotion among them. Jonarāja. pp.16, 18, 19.

[307] It is only during the reign of profane rulers like Harsa that probably this concession was withdrawn from the *brāhmanas* (*Rājatranginī*, vii. 1088).

[308] Ibid., iv. 88-105.

[309] Not only the revenue- free land grants were exclusively given to the *brāhmanas*, but we also find that even charity was distributed among the *brāhmanas* alone. Ibid., v. 16-17; viii. 244.

[310] Ibid., i. 312-316

[311] Ibid., vii. 12.

[312] Ibid., vii. 11.

[313] Ibid., i. 16-19.

[314] Ibid., i.307.

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While calling themselves 'gods of the earth,'[315] the *brāhmanas* had a strong taint to the calling of the working classes whom they considered as degrading subjects.[316] However, of all of the working classes *dombas, ćandālas* and *śvapākas* were the most hated creatures. They were considered impure whose touch would defile the twice-born. Writing about a *ćandāla* woman, who found a baby [future Suyya, the famous minister under Avantivarman] in an earthen vessel while sweeping up a dust heap on the road, Kalhana says, "Without defiling the child by her touch, she arranged for his keep in the house of a *śudra* nurse."[317] The single known marriage of a high caste, (King Cakravarman), with a *domba* girl created great commotion among *brāhmana* circles. The vile and obscene language which Kalhana uses against the *domba* girl, King Cakravarman and his associates alludes to the uncompromising belief of the *brāhmanas* in the impurity of the *dombas*,[318] though Kalhana himself says that the king was "love blind" and the *domba* girl was "sweet eyed"and matchless in "singing and acting".[319] Moreover, she along with her father had come from a foreign land and unlike a common *domba*, the *domba* in question was "resplendent with necklaces, golden bracelets on arms and hands, and other [ornaments]".[320] Still the king could not escape the scathing attacks of the *brāhmanas*. Kalhana's Brāhmanic feelings were so deeply hurt by this inter-caste marriage that he did not spare even those who were associated with King Cakravarman's court during the period when the *domba* woman was in the king's seraglio. About King Yaśaskara who succeeded to the throne nearly two years after Cakravarman's murder, he says, "From the intercourse with those who had taken *dombas'* food remnants, impurity fell upon Yaśaskara, just as the evil of leprosy spreads through the touch of a leper."[321] And when there was a great fire during the reign of Abhimanyu (958-971), Kalhana thrills with joy for "it purified the lands by burning the great buildings which had been defiled by the contact of the kings, who had been touched by the *dombas* and *ćandālas*".[322] The belief in the impurity of the *dombas* had influenced even the minds of the profane people so much that though Harsa had hardly any faith in Brāhmanism, and though he took into his seraglio whatever woman he could get, he rejected the women of *domba* and *ćandāla* castes.[323]

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[315] Ibid., viii. 2238, 2382.

[316] Ibid., vii. 39-41. For an idea about the Kashmiri *brāhmanas'* contempt for manual labour at the time Islam penetrated in Kashmir, it is rewarding to see the continuity of this attitude of theirs till our recent times, so graphically delineated by the keen European observers like the famous Christian missionary, Tyndale Biscoe. See his, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, pp. 276 sqq.

[317] *Rājatarangini*, v. 77.

[318] Ibid., v. 391 sqq.

[319] Ibid., v. 359 sqq.

[320] Ibid.

[321] Ibid., vi. 84.

The *dombas* were not ordinarily allowed to enter the temples of the gods. After hearing from his sources that the *Śvapāka* queen of Cakravarman was permitted to visit the temple, Kalhana was so much shocked that he burst out: "Surely gods of fierce might did not (then) dwell in this land, otherwise how could then *Śvapāka* woman have entered their temples".[324] Nor were they given audience in the audience hall.[325]

For various reasons the social organization of Kashmir had assumed so much elasticity that the *brāhmanas* had to compromise with the horizontal mobility, especially among the lower castes,[326] but if any low-born would rise to an upper rung of the social ladder even though solely by dint of his extraordinary capabilities, it was regarded as a clear indication of *Kali-yuga*. Scoffing at the rise of a low-born to a high position, Kalhana demonstrates the typical *brāhmana* caste-consciousness of the period:

> He [Tunga, the Prime Minister of Samgramaraja] took a low-born mean *kāyastha* Bhadresvara by name, as his assistant. This man's proper hereditary occupation as a gardener (*ārāmika*) had been to trade in night soil, to act as a butcher, to sell fuel, etc. Then for a living he had hung at the back of the officials, carrying their bags and ink pots, while a rough woollen cloth rubbed his [own] back. When Tunga who was worn out by the cares of endless official and other affairs, made him his assistant, he did not know that by this association he brought about the destruction of [his own] fortune.[327]

After observing the smug conceit of the *brāhmanas* and even some sections of Muslims, the Sūfi saints prudently stressed those social ideals of Islam which lay emphasis on equality and brotherhood and which recognize merit among the Muslims on the basis of their

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[322] Ibid., vi. 192.

[323] Ibid., vii. 964.

[324] Ibid., v. 394.

[325] *Kashmir Polity*, p. 179.

[326] *Rājataranginī*, vii, 38-41.

[327] Ibid.

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piety and learning rather than on the basis of descent.[328] Lashing out at those who claimed superior position on the basis of rich descent, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī persuasively argues against this affliction which he calls *bimārī* (disease):

> The first reason for pride is dynastic in origin. It often happens that a person of high pedigree looks down upon those who are lower in that respect, although they are far superior to him in terms of knowledge and virtuous action. Of this category of ignorant people, some [are so obstinate that they] treat the general public as slaves and bonded men and avoid their company. In fits of rage and anger their minds become so befogged that their tongues begin to overflow with all sorts of abuse. In such moods they address others as: mean, black and boorish. This malady [of being conceited] can be treated by two means: First, one should always bear in mind that this sort of pride springs from stupidity, for to claim pride on the basis of the superiority of someone else is sheer ignorance. The Arabic proverb says:
>
> > If you take pride in your superior ancestors,
> > You may be right but what a bad descendant you are!
>
> A man who boasts of one's rich ancestry, but is himself mean, the richness of his pedigree is only a source of ruin and humiliation to him. How can the good deeds of noble people offset the misdeeds of an errant? A depraved scion stands in the same relation to his [pious] ancestors as does the insect, bred in the offal of a respectable man, to the person of that noble man. This insect is in no way different from the one, which is born in offal of a donkey or a bull; both are equally odious.
>
> Secondly, one should never be forgetful of one's real origin. One immediately springs from the mean drops of semen, while the father of our fathers was raised from base dust. A man who bears in mind that his origin is the dust, which is trampled under the feet of sinful and vicious people as well as base animals, he can never feel proud of himself. Superiority, in reality, belongs to those who are pious.
>
> Tradition has it that one day two persons were taking pride in their rich ancestry in front of the Prophet. Upon this the Prophet said that two persons were boasting of their noble pedigree before Prophet Moses. One said to the other: "I am the son of such and such person, he is the son of such and such person" till he counted [boastfully] nine of his ancestors. Allāh sent a message to Moses. "Tell that person that all the persons whom he counted are all in Hell and you are the eleventh person to join them". That is why Prophet Muhammad said: It is obligatory upon the people to part company

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[328] "The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you", Qur'ān, 26:13

> with that group which takes pride in their ancestors, when they have been converted to fuel for Hell or else God through His Almighty rage turns them into worse than the insects born in carrion who live on filth and dirt.[329]

While expressing his views on *tawāza'* (obeisance) Sayyid 'Ali says that if a sweeper or a shoemaker approaches an *'alim*, the latter should talk to him in low tune and answer his questions with love and affection. He should try to solve his problems, without allowing his heart to entertain the idea of considering him low.[330]

The Sayyid also makes it obligatory upon the rulers not to make any difference between the 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' people:

> They [the Sultāns] should not expect the same behaviour from a man of a mountain as is exhibited by a person coming from a civilized area. So they should give a margin to the ignorance of the subjects, and should not refuse to admit anyone to their presence.[331]

The Suhrawardī saints also launched a crusade against the conceited people who claimed superior position on the basis of rich descent. Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī approvingly quotes Abū Sa'īd Abi'l Khair for having challenged a Sayyid who, on the basis of his pedigree, claimed a high status. Maulana 'Abd al Rahmān Jāmī has versified the conversation between the conceited Sayyid and Abū Sa'īd b. Abi'l Khair and the same is reproduced by Khākī in his *Dastūr al- Sālikīn.* The following two verses suffice our purpose:

نز نسب یافت آنچه جد تو یافت　　از نسب کس بقرب حق نشتافت
گر نسب ساختے سر افرازش　　بو لهب نیز بودے انبازش

> Your ancestor [Prophet Muhammad] did not achieve the Prophethood and exalted position by virtue of having a rich pedigree; nor has any one become the Friend of Haq (God) because of his [rich] descent.
>
> If the pedigree had been any factor in awarding him [the Prophet] an exalted position, then Abū Lahab [who belonged to the same tribe], too, would have earned the same status.[332]

It may be pertinent to mention here that the Sūfī saints, who became the ideals of Kashmiri masses for the Islamic way of life, were

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329 *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, Vol. I, pp.363-64

330 Ibid., p.375.

331 Ibid., p.192.

332 *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol.II, pp.610-12.

thoroughly indoctrinated and practically trained in the *khānaqāhs* of their preceptors about the Qur'ānic ideal that piety and not descent determines one's greatness. The biographer of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī quotes the Sayyid saying that when he intended to become the disciple of Shaikh Mahmūd Muzdaqānī, he was told, at the very outset, that the primary condition for any one to enter into his discipleship would be to shun one's family and worldly pride. Therefore "you [first] keep in order the shoes of this Negro slave, the sweeper of the *khānaqāh*, so that you consider yourself nothing, which is a pre-requisite for one in search of way to Allah. With great humility I obeyed his orders".[333] It was this spirit of Islam, which was imbibed by the saints who promoted conversions in Kashmir. They not only preached it through their homilies but also practically demonstrated it in the *khānaqāhs* established at different places in the Valley. They gave strict instructions to the *mutawalis* (managers) of the *khānaqāhs* not to make any discrimination between rich and poor or low-born or high born.[334] As per the *khānaqāh* rules the junior inmate, however rich or high he would be, had to remain obedient and subservient to his senior colleague, irrespective of his social background; and it was necessary for a *doulatmand* (rich) *murīd* (disciple) to forget his position and consider himself no more than a beggar.[335] To preach such Islamic teachings a network of *khānaqāhs* was built in different parts of the Valley, particularly amidst the Hindu localities and very close to their places of worship so that the depressed sections among them would be able to compare their own caste-ridden society with the casteless social system of Islam.[336]

The fact that the Muslim missionaries strove to wash off the social stigma of the low castes is also borne out by the distinguished *krāms* (surnames), which these low castes received at the hands of the Muslim preachers or which were assumed by them after their conversion. It is significant to mention here that all the erstwhile outcastes of Kashmir – *dombas*, *ćandāls*, *wātals*, *kirātas* (fishermen), *ārāmikas* (vegetable gardeners), butchers, etc., are having such dignified *krāms* as *Shaikh*, *Ganāī*, *Mīr*, *Dār*, *Sūfī*, etc. *Shaikh* means great, *Ganāī* stands for a man of letters, *Mīr* denotes leader and *Sūfī* is a direct adoption of the generic term used for the Muslim mystics. That after conversion the lower castes felt socially elevated can also be gauged by the fact that they assumed the surname *Dār* – the *krām* of a very prestigious noble family of the day. It may not be beside the point to mention here that in the elastic social organization of Kashmir, it was not something novel to see a low-born sloughing off the family *krām* and assuming some prestigious one to get out of the ruck, once he improved his position. Long before we find Kalhana writing about this pattern of upward social mobility in Kashmir: "When he [strolling player, Camaka] acquired fame [owing to the favours of the King Kalasa], he quickly cut off the family connection (*vamśa*) which caused him humiliation."[337]

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[333] Ja'far Badakhshi, *Manqabat al- Jawāhir* (ed. by G. M. Shāh, unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, CCAS, Kashmir University) p. 10.

[334] See *Waqf-nāma* of *Khānaqāh-i-Mu'alla*, which is preserved in the said *khānaqāh*. See also Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 13a-25b

[335] *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*, f. 15b

[336] A striking feature of the *khānaqāhs* and mosques built during the period under study is that they were established close to the Hindu places of worship, be it the *khānaqāhs* and mosques built in Srinagar or be it the ones established in other parts of the Valley.

It is a fact that Islam could not completely do away with the caste-oriented social system as some '*ulamā*' claimed a high position on the basis of rich descent[338] and that the professional groups of Kashmir were not ready to become exogamous and treat one another on an equal footing.[339] Yet in the caste-ridden social aura, fostered by the *brāhmanas*, simple theoretical teachings against caste, (leaving aside some unavoidable features of Islam's community life which group high or low in the same category) were sufficient to attract the low-caste Hindus to the fold of Islam. At least in the new social system the *dombas*, *ćandālas* and *śvapākas* were not 'impure' whose touch would defile the high-born; education was not the monoply of a particular group; hereditary religious class alone could not claim to be 'gods of earth'; a low-caste was not banned to enter a religious place and the working classes were not treated as degraded people. The Muslim immigrants, even the Sayyids, did not consider it a social taboo to enter into matrimonial relations with the local people. The only consideration before them was something pragmatic – matching cultural and

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[337] *Rājatarangini*, vii. 285-291.

[338] *Kulliyāt*, p.118; *Chilchilat al-'Ārifīn*, f. 49b.

[339] On account of the force of habit, occupational compulsions, cultural distinctiveness and differentiation in economic status between different occupational groups, Kashmiri Muslim society still continues to have endogamous groups. However, when the economic and educational position and resultantly the cultural status of the members of a given group gets far-reachingly improved, the lineage factor loses its importance with it; and even a family with rich pedigree and economic position enters into matrimonial relations with the otherwise poor pedigree holder.

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economic position of the family.[340] While the *brāhmanas* scoffed at the working class professions, Sūfī saints exhorted their disciples to opt for agriculture, crafts and calligraphy for making an honest living.[341] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī eked out his livelihood by making caps.[342] He considers it a symptom of pride and, therefore, a sin if one hesitates doing manual household work.[343] The Sayyid makes his point by drawing heavily on the life and teachings of the Prophet.[344]

These were verily revolutionary changes especially when, unlike in the previous times, it was a religion that was advocating abroad that piety not caste/profession determines one's greatness. Little wonder, then, that not a single low-caste showed unwillingness to enter into the fold of Islam. Their prompt acceptance of Islam is also corroborated by a *brāhmana* chronicler of the time who says that it was only the 'twice-born' who resisted to accept Islam.[345] That the present Hindu community of Kashmir, which survived the impact of Islam, is constituted exclusively of the *brāhmana* caste is, therefore, understandable.[346]

There can be no other excellent example to show that piety and not caste determined one's social position in the new circumstances, than to refer to the highly exalted position given to Shaikh Nūr al- Dīn, a *dombo* by caste, by the leading Muslim preachers and Sūfīs of the time.[347] Though according to the '*ulamā*' there were marked deviations from the *Sharī'ah* in the life-pattern of the Shaikh,[348] the religious luminaries, however, ignored them seeing the spiritual personality *par-excellence* of the Shaikh.[349] It is significant that all the leading preachers and Sūfīs and the people belonging to Sunni and Shi'i sects eulogized the Shaikh and held him in high

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340 See Śrīvara, pp. 157, 185; Sayyid 'Ali, f. 18a and *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 16a for an influential Sayyid group, Baihaqī Sayyids, giving their daughters in marriage to the Sultāns and nobles.

341 *Chilchilat al- 'Ārifīn*, ff. 10a, 21a.

342 Ja'far Badakhshī, *Khulāsat al- Manāqib*, p. 542.

343 *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, pp. 360-61

344 Ibid.

345 Jonarāja, pp. 60, 66-67.

346 The Hindu community of present day Kashmir mainly consists of *brāhmana* caste. There are a few other castes but they immigrated into Kashmir from other parts of northern India during the Sikh and the Dogra rule. See also Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 302 sqq.

347 For details, see *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, op.cit., pp.144-167.

348 *Nūr- nāma*, ff. 184b-185a.

349 *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, pp. 144-67.

veneration.[350] Coming from a humble family, the Shaikh played a crucial role in educating the people about the casteless character of Islamic society.[351] It may be recalled that some *'ulamā'* had assumed vauntingly a self-conceited notion by misinterpreting the Prophet's sayings.[352] But through his verbal discourse with the people as well as through his didactic poetry, which reached every nook and corner of Kashmir, thanks to his dedicated disciples, Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn launched a crusade against the brash distortions in Islam, before they could damage the cause of this newly-introduced religion. To quote a sardonic verse of the Shaikh against the mug-wump *'ulamā'*: "They have vanity of being special; not even one in a thousand would escape the wrath of God."[353] The Shaikh brought home to the people the difference between a real *'alim* and a pseudo *'alim*.[354] No wonder, then, that without being beguiled by the egocentric *'ulamā'*, the Kashmiri Muslims entertained such a strong contempt for them that instead of being venerated, they came down in public estimation.

The anti-snobbish spirit of Islam, preached by the great Muslim saints and carried forward by Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, was further popularized by the disciples of the Shaikh as well as by the Suhrawardī saints who dominated the religious scene of Kashmir during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These *Rishis*, while abandoning extreme form of asceticism, opted either for agriculture or for planting of trees for common good.[355] The Suhrawardī saints also exhorted their followers to give first preference to manual work for obtaining an honest living.[356] Thus the Sūfīs and Rishis captivated the hearts of the common people.

c) Religious Discords

Religiously also the society was divided into different antagonistic camps. Hinduism, the dominant faith of Kashmir, had split into different myriad belief systems, which were much at variance with one another.

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[350] While the Shi'i author of *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* refers to Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn as one of the leading religious luminaries of Sulṭān Zain al-'Ābidīn's time (*Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.26b), the other Shi'i chronicler of the period, Malik Haidar Chādūra gives details about the exalted spirituality of the Shaikh. Haidar Malik, pp.116-17.

[351] *Kulliyāt*, pp. 86, 104, 106.

[352] Ibid., *Chilchilat al-'Ārifīn*, f. 49b

[353] *Kulliyāt*, pp. 118

[354] Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn says, "If you are to be a *Mullā*, be what was Maulana Rūmī, otherwise touch wood" *Kulliyāt*, p. 120.

[355] *Nūr-nāma*, ff. 347a, 349a; Ā'īn-i *Akbarī* (text), II, pp. 351-52. *Tūzk-i Jahāngīrī* (text), p. 306.

[356] *Chilchilat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 20a, 21a.

True, Śaivism was the dominant cult from the tenth century A,D., it, too, had, however, broken into many sects, each following its own *ācāra* (code of conduct). Broadly speaking, the *ācāras* were of two categories: *Vamācāra* and *Dakśinācāra*. Yet each had fallen apart into many independent *ācāras*. Thus we come across the *ācāras* like *Kaulācāra*, *Trikācāra*, *Siddhantācāra*, *Samayācāra*, *Vedācāra*, *Vaiśnāvācāra* and *Śaivācāra*.[357] An idea of their contradictory views on vital issues can be inferred from the fact that the basic source of *Vamācāra* and its different sects was the *Tantras* and not the *Vedas*.[358] On the contrary, *Dakśinācāra* and its different forms followed the *Vedic and Smarta Puranic* norms.[359] Thus whereas the *Vamācāra* maintained non-Brāhmanical identity, the *Dakśinācāra* was essentially Brāhminical. Consistent with their own respective belief system, members of the *Vamācāra* cult discounted any external worship of the deity with flowers, etc., and resorted to five MS (wine, fish, meat, cake and coitus with beautiful women).[360] By contrast, the *Dakśinācāra* cult laid stress on external worskhop, took a meal of milk and rice and believed in enjoying only one's own wife.[361] While the different sects of *Dakśinācāra* were predominantly influenced by the *Vedic* and Brāhmanical ideas and, therefore, strictly believed in *varnāśrama*, the followers of *Vamācāra* maintained their own system of *sadhana* which was characterised by two main features – initiation and rejection of *varna* rules.[362]

The different sects belonged to three different schools – dualistic, dualistic-cum-monistic, and monistic schools. While on the one hand the *brāhmanas*, who followed the *Vedic* and *Smarta Puranic* norms, believed in pantheism and worshipped objects of nature and practised idolatory, the believers of monism launched a frontal attack against Vedic rituals and idol worship.[363] As a matter of fact, the Hindu society of Kashmir was divided into different religious camps, each looking upon the other as antagonistic, perverse and purposeless. For example, *brāhmanas* who upheld the orthodox point of view denounced the *Kaulācāra* as an "uncouth way followed by those who have no faith in the *Vedas*, *Agnihotras* and pious deeds."[364] In the same vein the advocates of *Kaula* system drubbed its opponents and considered their own *ācāra* as the most excellent of the prevalent *ācāra*.[365] It is also important to mention here that the *brāhmana* writers call the adherents of the non-Brāhmanic sects atheists; and when the *brāhmanas* dominated the power structure, the heterodox sects became an eyesore and were subjected to persecuation.[366]

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[357] *Śaivāgamas*, op.cit., pp.174-177.
[358] Ibid. Also see B. N. Pandit, *Kashmiri Saivism*, pp. 2, 188.
[359] *Śaivāgamas*, pp. 174-77.
[360] Ibid.
[361] Ibid.
[362] Ibid., p. 175.
[363] See Supra, pp. 90-91, 153.
[364] *Śaivāgamas*, pp. 176-77. It may be mentioned that the *Kaulācāra* practised five MS and did not believe in *Varna* System. Ibid.

That sectarianism had made Hinduism muzzy, Muslim preachers understood it readily. Therefore, it is not for nothing that they did not indulge in controversies. They were so conscious of the inimical impact of sectarianism upon the minds of the people that although Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī was a *Shafi'ite*, he did not make it an issue because his predecessor, Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn belonged to the *Hanafi* school and had, therefore, introduced Islam according to *Hanafi'ite* thought. Sayyid 'Ali did not object if any of his followers wished to remain a *Hanafi'ite*; nor did he oppose the practice of *Hanafi'ite* law in Kashmir.[367] This clearly explains the sensitiveness of the issue albeit the different schools of thought in Islam, which existed in Kashmir at that time, do not disagree on any fundamental issue. It is only towards the beginning of the sixteenth century that the Muslim society of Kashmir came to be divided into two sects – Sunnis and Shi'is. However, by that time majority of the people had already accepted Islam. Notwithstanding the fact that sectarianism caused much damage to the cause of Islam, the two sects differed not on fundamentals but in their interpretation of some events in the history of Islam.

'Strange, this believer in Allāh became the saviour of the people'

Acceptance or rejection of any invasive religion or ideology by the people of a given society depends, besides other things, upon what kind of badge as administrators the advocates of change carry with them. It assumes crucial importance especially when the people are tormented for want of security to one's life and property owing to political instability and lawlessness.

On the eve of the establishment of the Muslim Sultanate, Kashmir presented a very dismal picture. It was drooping for want of efficient rulers, political stability and security to life and property. Intrigues, treachery, murders, civil wars, rebellions, greed, coups, quick

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[365] Ibid.

[366] Kṣemendra, *Nītikalpataru*, 130, 1-11, 2-8 (Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, pp. 178, 179) Mankha, *Śrikanthacarita, Sarga XXV; Agamadambara*, IV, (Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, pp. 62, 71).

[367] *Manqabat al-Jawāhir*, pp. 86-92; *Fathāt-i Kubraviyya*, f. 147b.

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enthronement and dethronement of rulers,[368] inhuman exactions to spend on wars and to appease rival factions and contenders to throne,[369] loss of central authority, apathy to the problems of the people, negligence of borders[370] and the plundering raids of the hilly tribes that surrounded Kashmir,[371] had devoured the peace of mind and prosperity of the people. The Mongol invasion of 1320[372] further deteriorated the situation. Following the decay of the central authority and division of the empire into small fiefs, each under a fief holder, the worst casualty was the defence sector. Encouraged by the unguarded borders, the Mongol invaders invaded the Valley without any resistance.[373] Like true Mongols, the invaders indulged in loot, plunder, arson and massacre.[374] Instead of giving a fight to the invader the reigning ruler, Suhadeva, imposed a new tax upon all classes of people and offered it to the invader.[375] This appeasement policy worked contrarily. On the one hand it added to the unpopularity of the ruler and on the other the desire of the invader to invade Kashmir was further whetted. Unable to put up resistance, the ruler fled from the Valley, leaving the people to their own fate.[376] The same cowardice was shown by his brother Udayanadeva who, after a brief rule of a Buddhist-turned-Muslim ruler, Rinchana (1320-1323), was installed on the throne of Kashmir through the good offices of a powerful Muslim noble, Shāh Mīr.[377] During his reign (1323-38), Kashmir was subjected to another invasion by one Achala who invaded Kashmir from northern side of its borders.[378] Instead of fighting the invader, the ruler, following in the footsteps of

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[368] Cf. *Rājataranginī*, Books, vii, viii. Also see Jonarāja, pp. 4-19.

[369] *Rājataranginī*, viii. 2227-36; Jonarāja, p. 16.

[370] From the brief code of political wisdom, Kalhana puts into the mouth of Lalitaditya (*Rājataranginī*, iv. 344-52), it seems that the negligence of borders had become a fact of the collapse of the political management of Kashmir long back during the time of Kalhana. The situation worsened as the time went by, giving a free passage to the foreign invaders

[371] According to al-Birūni Kashmir suffered much from the inroads of the Turkish tribes living on the mountains of Bolar and Shamilan whose towns are Gilgit, Aswira (Astor) and Shiltas (Chilas). *Kitāb al-Hind* (tr. Sachu), Vol. I, p. 207.

[372] For details of this invasion, see *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 34-36.

[373] Ibid.

[374] For the devastation caused by Zulju's invasion, see Jonarāja, pp. 17-18; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 5ab.

[375] Jonarāja, p. 16.

[376] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 5a; Haidar Malik, pp. 35, 36.

[377] Writing about this Jonarāja says, "Shahamera bestowed on Udayanadeve the country of Kashmira together with queen Shrikota who was the goddess of victory incarnate". Jonarāja, p. 24.

[378] Jonarāja, p. 25; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 7b,8a.

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his brother, left the Valley to seek shelter elsewhere without caring for his subjects.[379] It was on account of the joint efforts of Queen Kōta Rānī and Shāh Mīr that Kashmiris were ultimately saved from the impending disaster.[380] Impressed by the valiant role played by Shāh Mīr during Achala's invasion, Jonarāja exclaims with surprise, "Strange, this believer in Alla [Allāh] became the saviour of the people. As a dried up river allows men to cross it, and gives them shelter on its banks even so this believer in Alla, calm and active, protected the terrified subjects".[381]

Even during the period of Rinchana and Udayandeva, Shāh Mīr had displayed considerable political acumen. Viewing the comparatively better position of Rinchana, Shāh Mīr helped him in his bid to capture the throne.[382] He was also probably responsible in influencing Rinchana's mind in favour of Islam and in bringing him closer to Bulbul Shāh.[383] Moreover, he remained his faithful ally, when his other non-Muslim ministers turned traitors.[384] Above all, he maintained intimate relations with the Lord of *Dvāra*,[385] Lord of *Bāngil*,[386] Lord of *Kōta*,[387] Lord of *Kampāna*[388] and the most turbulent tribe, the *Lavanyas* by entering into matrimonial relations with them.[389] He then brought under his possession the province of *Shamāla*[390] and fortified the *Chakrādhāra* hill[391] and thus

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[379] Ibid.

[380] Ibid.

[381] Jonarāja, p. 26.

[382] That is why Rinchana entrusted the care of his son to Shāh Mīr. Jonarāja, p. 23.

[383] *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, (tr. Jarrett), II, p.184.

[384] Jonarāja, p. 23.

[385] *Davāra* is a term used by Kalhana for frontier passes and watch stations (*Rājataranginī*, i. 122n; iv. 404; v. 137). Therefore, the Lord of Davāra means Lord of the frontier passes.

[386] Bāngil or Bāngila was a *Vaisya* (*pargana*) near Patan. M.A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol. II, p. 480-481.

[387] Kōta means castle. It is an abbreviation for Loharakota. Stein, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 297n.

[388] Kampāna means army (Stein. op.cit., Vol. I, pp. 331-232n, 447). Thus it means Commander-in-Chief.

[389] Jonarāja, pp. 26-27.

[390] Shamāla of the Sanskrit chroniclers and Hamāl of the later period lies to the west of Sopore (Stein, op.cit., Vol.I, p. 280 note 159)

[391] Chakradhāra is a small "udar" or alluvial plateau, which owing to its height and isolated position is a very conspicuous object in the landscape. It lies on the left bank of river Jhelum, one mile below the town of Bijbehāra. Stein, Vol. I, p.9 note38.

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"showed to the people that his works were imperishable."[392] Realizing that only this believer in Allah could save ~~them from the da~~ily troubles of lawlessness created by weak rulers, the people supported him in assuming the reins of the government. As a ruler, too, Sultān Shāh Mīr, to quote Jonarāja, "assuaged the troubles of Kashmir and changed its condition.[393] He further says that "the king who had won fame worthy of praise caused the Rajputs who were at *kishthavāta*[394] to flee through fear. His fame increased and he wisely placed on his two sons, who were not inferior to him, the burden of the kingdom".[395]

Thus the founder of the Muslim Sultanate in Kashmir inaugurated a new era of peace and prosperity after prolonged chaotic conditions Kashmir had witnessed during the Hindu rulers. And whatever was left incomplete by him was accomplished by one of his illustrious successors, Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn, who with a strong hand brought the whole Valley under the central control,[396] which further convinced the local populace that only the believers in Allāh can bail Kashmir out of the welter of chaos and confusion. They had a long experience of extraordinary capabilities of Muslim captains employed by the Hindu rajas[397] and the meritocracy of Muslims through the extraordinary role played by newly arrived Muslims, like Shāh Mīr, who not only outplayed all the local nobles but also became a hero of the people. The widely known military might of the Muslims who had brought the whole neighbourhood of Kashmir under their sway and put an end to an era riven by wars, was an additional factor for grief-stricken Kashmiris to be favourably inclined towards Muslims and their religion. For about a quarter and a century there was complete peace in the Valley and it was during this period that major work of conversion was accomplished.

Islam as a reference group culture

By the beginning of the fourteenth century when the process of mass conversion to Islam started in Kashmir, Islam had already become dominant ,politically as well as culturally. Having brought a major part of the globe under their sway, the Muslims were ruling from Spain to

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[392] Jonarāja, p. 27.

[393] Ibid., p. 32.

[394] Kishthvāta means Kishtawār.

[395] Jonarāja, p. 33.

[396] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.9a-b; Haidar Malik, pp. 40-41. For the mighty rule of Sultān Shihāb al-Dīn, see also Jonarāja, pp. 37-40.

[397] See Chapter II, pp. 48-49.

Sumatra and from the Swahili coast to Kazan on the Volga. It was not, however, merely the political supremacy that had put Islamic culture in a pre-eminent position vis-à-vis the other major cultures of the Middle Ages, the Muslims had also made tremendous developments in different disciplines, namely, philosophy, science, technology, the fine arts, social sciences, state- craft, law, religion and literature. After all, the most renowned philosophers, mathematicians, astronomers, chemists, physicists, geographers, engineers, political scientists, historiographers, jurists, theologians, mystic masters, litterateurs and poets of medieval times mainly belonged to the Islamic world, particularly Persia and Central Asia.

This is not the place even for a mere catalogue of names of Muslim geniuses in different fields. As a few illustrative names we may recall al-Rāzī, Ibn Sina, al-Farābī, Abū-Ma'ashir, al-Khwarazmī, al-Birūnī, 'Umar Khayyām, Ibn Rushd, Imām Ghazzālī, Nizām al- Mulk Tūsī, Ibn Khaldūn, Abū Hanīfa, al-Hujwarī, Abdal Qādir Gilānī, Ibn 'Arabī, Jalal al-Dīn Rumī, Hāfiz and Sa'idī. This is also not the place to describe the achievements of each of them. Suffice it to say that Razi's treatises on alchemy and medical science established his reputation as an original thinker and greatest clinician of the Middle Ages.[398] Ibn Sina's *Qānūn* was the chief guide of medical science in the West between the 12th and 17th centuries;[399] and according to Dr Oslar it remained a medical bible for a longer period than any other work.[400] Abū-Ma'ashir was a widely read astrologer in medieval Europe and he was also a communicator of the laws of tides to Europe.[401] According to P. K. Hitti, al-Khwārazmī influenced mathematical thought more than any other medieval writer.[402] The Muslims had also made significant contribution in civil and mechanical engineering, weaving of carpets, textiles and making of metal work.[403] To quote Marshall G.

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[398] P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, p. 366.

[399] Ibid., p. 368.

[400] William Oslar, *The Evolution of Muslim Medicine* (New Havan, 1922) p. 98 (Vide, P. K. Hitti, op.cit., p. 368).

[401] Ibid., p. 378.

[402] Ibid., p. 379.

[403] For details, see Hassan and Hill, *Islamic Technology*, Cambridge 1986; Thomas Arnold and Arthur Guillaume (eds.) *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford University Press 1931; P. K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, Chapter XXVII; M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham and R. B. Serjeant (eds.), *Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period*, Cambridge University Press, 1990; Bernard Lewis, *The World of Islam*, London, 1994, Chapter VII.

S. Hodgson: "By and large Islamdom, especially at the start of the Earlier Middle Period, was more advanced technically than most of the Occident".[404] If less industrially developed than the Chinese, "the Muslims yet were more widely influential than any other bloc in shaping the cultural interchange", thanks to geographical centrality of the Muslims and their cosmopolitanism that allowed them to take full advantage of their central position.[405]

With all the attributes of a great civilization, Islam had emerged as, what may be called, the 'reference civilization' for others, who came into contact with it, to emulate it either to claim a membership of a high civilization or to replace the Muslims as hegemonist power. However, whatever the reason for emulations, Islamic culture had attained such pre-eminence among contemporary cultures that it made all others see their self-image and reach self-appraisals through the mirror of Islam and the values and standards of Muslim society.

It was with this status that Islam entered Kashmir. To the Kashmiri psyche, too, Islam established itself as the religion of a successful man and decidedly the religion of a far- superior culture. It was not only in Kashmir that the Muslims put an end to a long but chaotic rule of the Hindu rajas, but before that the S'āhi kingdom of Kabul and the centre of Hinduism, Hindustan (the territories with which the Kashmiris had emotional relations, notwithstanding their scant information of the happenings beyond the mountain ramparts hemmed in with which they were)[406] and the petty hill-states immediately adjoining Kashmir (with which the Kashmiris were intimately connected)[407] had fallen to the Muslims armies. One can understand why *Turuska* [Muslim] became a proverbial term with the *brāhmana* chroniclers of Kashmir for great conquerors.[408] What is more important, Islam entered Kashmir not merely with a new religious system but it also brought with itself a new culture, which was by all reckoning superior to the one we encounter in Kashmir before the penetration of Islam. It may seem puzzling but it is a fact that it was the Muslims who introduced in Kashmir the spinning wheel,[409] draw loom,[410] rearing of silk worms and manufacturing of silken clothes,[411] shawl making,[412] carpet weaing,[413] paper making,[414] book binding,[415] calligraphy, permanent bridge building,[416] cannon and gun making,[417] tinning and ornamentation of tinned ware,[418] glazed tile making,[419] a superior kind of wood work,[420] grafting,[421] knowledge of a new system of medicine (*'ilm'i tib*), *shifā khāna* (hospital), *astorlāb*,[422] advanced mathematics (*hisābdānī*)[423] and new astrological knowledge (*'ilm'i ramal*),[424] the *rabāb* and the lute,[425] new Persian metres,[426] new dishes (*wazwān*),[427] new *murabbiha*[428] (jams), new sweets (*halwa-hai-rangā rang*),[429] new dress–*qamīs* (shirt), *sirwāl* (trousers), *sadrī* (waist coat), *abā*, *qabā*, *chogā*,[430] etc., and last but not least, new poetic genres-*ghazl*, *qasidah*, *marsiya*, *rubā'ī*, *mathnavī*, *na't* and *manqabat*.[431]

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[404] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 365.

[405] Ibid.

[406] For the fact that the Kashmiri ruling and religious elite had intimate relations with the Śahi Kingdom of Kabul, see *Rājataranginī*, vi. 177, 178,; vii. 103, 144, 178, 956, 1469-1470. And that the Kashmiris knew very little about the outside world, cf. M. A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol. 1, Introduction, pp. 30-31.

[407] Ibid

[408] *Rājataranginī*, vii. 51, 56, 70, 118, 1158; viii. 885, 886, 919, 923, 2843.

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[409] According to Joseph Needham, the spinning wheel originated in China during the first century A.D. (Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. IV, pp. 102-5, 107, 266-68). Outside China, Islamic civilization seems to be the first to accept this superb invention much earlier than its first known appearance in Europe-1240-45 A.D. In the Islamic civilization Persian poets offer references to the spinning wheel (*charkha*) in 1138-39 and 1257, which makes it clear that by the 12th century the spinning wheel had become widespread in Central Asia and Iran. In India the earliest reference occurs in 1350, in the verses of the historian Isami. Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds.) *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol.I, pp.77-78.

Since the streaming of Persian and Central Asian people into Kashmir dates not later than the eleventh century, it is most probable that the spinning wheel found its way into Kashmir through them, although we find the first reference to it in the verses by Shaikh Nūr al- Dīn, the 15th century saint of Kashmir. That the spinning wheel was perhaps introduced into Kashmir by Persian and Central Asian Muslims is also substantiated by the fact that the Kashmiri spinning wheel typologically takes after the spinning wheel of Central Asia.

[410] Śrivara, pp. 151-52.

[411] *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* (tr. Elias and Ross), p. 425; Śrivara, pp. 151-52.

[412] The earliest evidence of shawl weaving is found in the works of the famous 11th century poet and polyhister, Ksemendra, *Narmamālā*, 11.45 (Vide, Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure in Ancient and Medieval India*, p. 109). As the weaving technique referred to by Ksemendra has been existing in Iran and Central Asia since early times (John Irwin, *The Kashmiri Shawl*, pp. 43-50) and as all the technical terms, which a shawl involves during the process of its manufacture, bear purely Persian names (Moorcraft and Treback, *Travels*, Vol.II, pp. 179-94), it is irresistible to conclude that the technique of shawl weaving was introduced in Kashmir by the Central Asian Muslims whom we find in a large number in Kashmir during the eleventh century (see Chapter 1). However, during the fifteenth century shawl weaving techniques were further improved by the Persian and Central Asian artisans, making it, in the words of Śrivara, "fit for the Kings" (Śrivara, op.cit., p. 151).

[413] Sayyid 'Ali, op.cit., f. 15b.

[414] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 22b-23a; Sayyid 'Ali, f15b; Haidar Malik, pp. 46-47.

[415] Ibid.

[416] Before the Sultans there were no permanent bridges in Kashmir. Instead, the Jehlum was spanned by binding the boats together by chains (M. A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol. II, p. 449). The first permanent bridge was constructed by Sultān 'Ali Shāh (1412-20) in the name of 'Alī Kadal (Abū Rafi al-Dīn Ahmad, *Nawādir al- Akhbār*, f. 32b). This was followed by Zaina Kadal, Fateh Kadal and Habba Kadal constructed by Sultān Zain al- 'Ābidīn, Sultān Fateh Shāh, and Sultān Habib Shāh respectively. Śrivara, p. 127, Haidar Malik, p. 45; *Nawādir al- Akhbār*, f. 34a; Pir Hasan Shāh, *Tārīkh-i Hasan*, Vol. I, p. 370).

It is true that for about half a century, even after the foundation of the Muslim Sultanate, Islam was peripheral to the Kashmiri society, albeit a process of imitating Islam had started taking place even before the establishment of the Sultanate.[432] Yet, as the Muslims were numerically a very small group, the Hindu culture continued to be the 'reference model' even for the Muslims. Small wonder, then, that we find even the Muslim rulers going to temples, performing *Yagna*, being

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417 Śrivara, p. 105.

418 Since the Muslims use copper cooking and eating vessels, these have to be tinned before they can be employed and used with safety. Thus the ornamentation of tinned ware was essentially introduced in Kashmir by the Muslims. For further details, see George Watts and Percy Brown, *Arts and Crafts of India*, pp. 16, 27, 35, 36.

419 The first specimen of glazed tiles belongs to the reign of Sultān Zain al- 'Ābidīn who used them in the construction of the tomb of his mother at Srinagar

420 The *Jali* screens of the existing Jāmi' Masjid and Khānaqāh-i-Mu'alla at Srinagar and the *khatamband* of the latter is an eloquent testimony of the effective lattice work and the graceful geometric panellings applied to ceilings – a contribution of Muslims which made Kashmir famous for woodwork.

421 *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (text), p. 304.

422 *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 16b

423 A number of manuscripts on *hisāb dānī* (mathematical sciences) are preserved in the Oriental Research Library of Srinagar.

424 *Tadhkiratal- 'Ārifīn*, ff. 470b-71a.

425 Śrivara, pp. 135-36.

426 Ibid.

427 *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 68, 94, 283; *Tadhkirat al- 'Ārifīn*, f. 456b

428 Ibid., pp. 124, 125, 151, 161, 283.

429 Ibid.

430 *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, Vol.I, p.182; Vol.II, p. 400.

431 The only literary genres that obtained in Kashmir prior to the Muslims were *Vaakh*, *watsun and shrukh*. For details, see Abdul Ahad Azad, *Kashmiri Zabān Aur Shā'ri*.

432 See Chapter II, pp. 48-53.

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dressed in Hindu fashionable clothes and showing hardly any regard for the *Shari'ah.*[433]

However, the trend changed when Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī entered the Valley in 1384 along with his seven hundred disciples.[434] The Sayyid not only exhorted the ruler to be a symbol of Islamic life style, which he readily accepted, [435] but he also instructed his disciples to launch a systematic and organized movement for conversion. Thus not only a network of new institutions, mosques, *khānaqāhs*, *maktabs* and *madrasas* came to be established in the otherwise temple-dotted Kashmir,[436] but the new culture and life style started making deeper inroads into the local culture At the same time owing to the conversion movement of the preachers, a large number of people entered into the fold of Islam and the Islamization of the ruling elite was greatly accelerated[437] It is from now onwards that regular Friday prayers began to be offered first in the capital city and subsequently at other places.[438]

Sultān Sikandar's reign (1389-1413) is particularly remarkable for the influx of Muslims from different lands of Persia and Central Asia. To quote the following ructions of Jonarāja:

> It was perhaps owing to the sins of the subjects that the king [Sultān Sikandar] had a fondness for *Yavanas*, even as a boy has a fondness for mud. Many *Yavanas* left other sovereigns and took shelter under the king who was renowned for charity, even as bees leave the flowers and settle on elephants... Attracted by the gifts and honours which the king bestowed, and by his kindness, the *mlecchas* entered Kashmira, even as locusts enter a good field of corn.[439]

Doubtless, during the reign of Sultān Sikandar there was continuous streaming of Muslims in the Valley.[440] Yet of the most influential groups to set foot in the Valley was the one that was headed by Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī – a zealous missionary. The group consisted of three hundred members who settled in different parts of the Valley.[441]

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[433] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[434] Ibid., pp. 57-62.

[435] Ibid.

[436] Sayyid 'Ali, ff.11ab, 12b, 29a-31b. See also Appendix I and IV

[437] Sayyid 'Ali, ff.5b, 6a.

[438] Ibid.

[439] Jonarāja, pp. 57-58.

[440] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 9b-12b, 29ab. Also, see *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 15a, 16ab.

[441] Ibid. See also Appendix I.

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The Muslims who accompanied Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī and Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī mainly comprised *sayyids*, *'ulamā'*, sūfīs, scholars, litterateurs, poets, master craftsmen, artisans, physicians (*atibba*) and many other professionals. Given the fact that the purpose of the mission of the two preachers was to Islamize Kashmir, the predominant number of their followers being *sayyids*, *'ulamā'*, sūfīs, scholars and litterateurs is understandable. But what one wonders at is the Muslim preachers' zeal to replace the local culture by a full-fledged Muslim culture for which they brought with them literature and a large number of masterminds and professionals who were experts in different fields of Islamic culture. Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī had brought with him a complete library wherein one could find even the rarest books. The library was under the charge of a *kitābwār* (librarian).[442] It is also interesting to mention that the master masons who were the brains behind constructing the famous *Jāmi' Masjid* at Srinagar were the followers of Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī who along with his other disciples accompanied him to Kashmir.[443]

It is for the first time that at the instance of Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī, a hospital (*dar al- shafā*) was opened in Kashmir during the reign of Sultān Sikandar by the Muslim doctors who had accompanied the Islamic mission; the hospital provided free food, boarding, lodging and medicine to the patients.[444]

Also, it was during the reign of Sultān Sikandar that Islamic institutions came to be established in great numbers. *Maktabs*, *madrasas* and *khānaqāhs* were built in city, towns and villages; and the *sayyids* and *'ulamā'* were provided grants with great liberality.[445] The most magnificent *Jāmi' Masjid*, the like of which according to a contemporary chronicler, could not be found anywhere "in Hind, Sind, Iran and Turan save Misar and Sham"[446] and the famous Khānaqāh-i-Mu'alla were built in the capital city, Srinagar.[447] Big mosques and *khānaqāhs* were also constructed in different towns.[448] However, the most important development of the reign of the Sultān was the

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[442] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 6a-7a.

[443] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 13b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 16b.

[444] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 16b.

[445] Ibid., 16ab.

[446] Ibid., 16b. For some architectural features of the mosque as it existed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Haidar Malik, p.44.

[447] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 13a, 13b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 16ab.

[448] Ibid., Haidar Malik, p. 45.

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conversion to Islam of a large number of people including many *brāhmanas,* and the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Sultān.[449] On account of the conversion of a large population including the ruling class, it became possible to Islamize the statecraft, which was one of the main concerns of Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī.[450] So enormous was the impact of Islamic culture upon Kashmir that the stubborn *brāhmanas* were astounded to see it:

> As the wind destroys the trees, and the locusts the *shali* crop, so did the *Yavanas* destroy the usages of Kashmira.[451]

Muslims belonging to the upper strata of the society and having specialization in different fields of knowledge continued to pour into Kashmir till the end of the Sultanate. However, the most significant periods in this regard were those of Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn, Sultān Muhammad Shāh and Mirzā Haidar Dughlat.

Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn's (1420-70) historic zeal to place Kashmir on the map of the most advanced countries of the world is too well known to need elaboration here.[452] In order to fulfil this cherished objective, the Sultān not only sent Kashmiris to many advanced Muslim countries to get training in various fields of science and technology[453] and to procure books, not available in the Valley,[454] but he also extended generous patronage to the learned men to attract them to serve in Kashmir.[455] As a result, a galaxy of Muslim engineers, master-craftsmen, scholars, physicians, poets and litterateurs thronged the Valley.[456] To quote his court historian, Śrivara, "Who did not seek to please the monarch and what artists possessed of great designs in art did not come from distant countries like bees to the monarch who was almost like the Kalpa tree"?[457]

On account of the transfer of new technology and owing to the procurement of scholarly and epoch -making works (*kitab-i-mu'tabara*

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[449] Supra, p.62.

[450] Supra, pp.62-63.

[451] Jonarāja, p. 57.

[452] For details, see N. K. Zutshi, *Sultan Zain ul-Abidīn of Kashmir.* See also my article "Modes of Technology and Culture Transmission from Central Asia to Kashmir" in B. K. Deambi, (ed.) *Kashmir and Central Asia,* pp. 67-69.

[453] Sayyid 'Ali, 16ab; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī,* ff. 22b, 23a, Haidar Malik, pp. 46-47.

[454] Ibid.

[455] Śrivara, pp. 105, 135, 151; Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 15b-16a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī,* ff. 22b, 23ab.

[456] Ibid.

[457] Śrivara, p. 151.

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wa tasānīf-i gariba) from Samarqand, Bukhārā, Faras, Khurāsān, 'Irāq, Sijistan and Makka,[458] Kashmir rivalled with the most advanced Muslim countries of the world.[459]

Further impetus to the development of Muslim culture was given by the Baihaqī Sayyids and the Islamic mission headed by Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī. The Baihaqī Sayyids, who constituted one of the most powerful groups of the nobility, came to Kashmir from Sabzawār, Khurāsān during the reign of Sultān Sikandar.[460] However, it was during the time of Sultān Haidar Shāh (1470-72) and Sultān Hasan Shāh (1472-84) that they became almost virtual rulers owing to their matrimonial relations with the ruling dynasty.[461] While showing zeal in Islamizing Kashmir, they particularly prevailed upon the rulers to give up un-Islamic practices and to patronize Islamic learning.[462] This is why Śrivara bears strong ill will against them.[463]

Mīr Shamas al- Dīn 'Irāqī's mission was so comprehensive that he brought with him experts even to settle small matters of daily life. This is graphically referred to by the author of *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*:

> Darvaish Salmān was given the charge of looking after the horses; Darvaish Tāj al-Dīn was assigned the charge of kitchen; Hājī Bayazīd was given the charge of *sharbat khāna* and *rikābkhāna*; and he had to look after the preparation of different kinds of *halwa*, jams, beverages and food which formed the special diet [of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn]; and Hājī 'Ali was given the charge of his dress.[464]

Mīr Shamas al-Dīn also converted a large number of people to Islam,[465] and built mosques and *khānaqāhs* at different places, the most important being the Khānaqāh-i-Zadibal.[466]

Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, a Central Asian invader who ruled Kashmir for about ten years (1540 -1550), further contributed to Islamization of Kashmiri culture. He made a conscious attempt in this direction by settling a large number of his countrymen in Kashmir[467]

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458 *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.23a.
459 Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, p. 434.
460 *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 18a-21b.
461 Śrivara, pp. 223, 241sqq. See also *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.29a, sqq.
462 Ibid., p. 268.
463 Ibid., 241 sqq.
464 *Tuhfat al -Ahbāb*, pp. 12-13.
465 Supra., pp.69-70, 127.
466 Ibid., p.69.
467 Writing about the influx of Mughals in the wake of Mirzā Haidar Daughlat's conquest of Kashmir, Śuka says, " The Muggulas [Mughals] spread themselves over the kindgom without fear or dread like goblins at the shrine of Sharada; and

and by opening *maktabas* in every village, besides appointing *muhatasibs*[468] and introducing new technology and making innovations in dress and diet.[469] An idea of the profound impact of Mirzā Haidar's measures in accelerating the pace of Islamization in Kashmir can be had from the trenchant remarks Śuka passed on to those members of his community who imitated the Muslim dress and diet in association with the *Turuskas*[470]

All in all, therefore, the seeds of Islamization sown before the foundation of the Sultanate, germinated with the capture of power by the Muslims, sprouted and grew towards the close of the fourteenth century, emerged in full size by the end of the fifteenth century and branched off and ramified by the turn of the sixteenth century.

Mosques, *madrasas*, *khānoqāhs*, Islamic learning, the Persian and Arabic languages, new industrial and medical technology, new fairs, festivals, manners and beliefs, new attitudes, new architecture, new mode of worship, new dress and diet, new means of entertainment, new institutions, new preferences and a new religious class made such serious inroads into the old socio-cultural set up of Kashmir that to the cussed *brāhmanas* it appeared nothing less than 'a wind' that 'destroys the trees',[471] or the 'locusts' that 'destroy the *shālī* crop'[472] or the 'calamity owing to the sins of the people'.[473]

Now the rulers and the nobles did not visit the temples, *mathas* and *asthapanas*; they visited the mosques, *khānaqāhs* and tombs of saints instead.[474] Old mode of worship, chanting of *mantras*, worshipping of idols, beating of drums, drinking and dancing and the age-old festivals lost the participation and encouragement of the ruling elite and resultantly the prestige and charm too. Now it was *namāz* that was offered, *roza* (fast) that was kept, *aurād* that was recited and *'Id* and other Muslim festivals that were celebrated by the politically and economically influential sections of the people. Sanskrit was replaced by

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their people came like bees from foreign countries to Mereja Mashugola [Mirza Haidar Dughlat], Śuka, p. 379.

[468] Bābā Nasīb, *Nūr-nāma*, ff. 415a-417ab.

[469] Śuka, p.379-380 *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (text), p. 305; Abu Rafi al-Dīn Ahmad, *Nawādir al-Akhbār*, f. 49b.

[470] Śuka, p. 380.

[471] Jonarāja, p. 57.

[472] Ibid.

[473] Śrivara, pp. 319-20, 339, 380

[474] We know of only one sultan, Sultān Zain al- 'Ābidīn, visiting the Hindu *tīrthas*. Śrivara, pp. 146-47.

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Persian as the court language. The Qur'ān, Islamic sciences, works on Sūfism, Persian poetry and grammar took the place of Vedas, *Tantras*, *Purānas*, *Kāvyas* and Sanskrit grammar. Now it was the former that was taught, discussed and learnt by the most venerated sections of the society.[475] The new religious group comprising *Sayyids*, *Sūfīs*, *'ulamā'* and Rishis were thronged by the majority of the people including the Sultāns, nobles and other rich classes for fulfilling their wishes. The Persian and Central Asian attire replaced the royal dress of the Hindu times.[476] Sumptuous dishes, unheard of in the history of Kashmir, introduced by the Muslims, broke resolution of the well-to-do sections of the society.[477] Beef was not now a religious taboo. It was taken as a dainty dish by the leaders of Islam and those at the helm of affairs.[478] Instead of cremations, the royal heroes were buried and spacious tombs were built upon them.[479]

The adoption of this new life style, imported by the Muslim preachers and other Muslim immigrants, became all the more fashionable among the authoritative and prestigeful stratum of the society. Hence Islamic culture became what in the sociological terms we may call the *reference group* culture. To all those people who wanted to affiliate themselves with the upper sections of the social ladder or were desirous of equality of status, Islamic culture was the comparative frame of reference – a touchstone for self-evaluation and attitude-formation – a mirror to see their self-images. Thus all the prospective acceptors tended to assimilate the sentiments and conform to the values of Islam.

The first and the main group that was influenced by the *reference culture* (Islam) belonged to the upper stratum of the society. The reasons were obvious. First, they, as courtiers, ministers, officials and businessmen, had intimate interaction with the Muslims, which consequently exercised sovereign influence upon their thinking and behaviour. Secondly, as mentioned earlier, the Muslim preachers concentrated more on winning over the *reference group* of the pre-conversion Kashmiri society as a policy to win over the whole society.

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[475] See *Dastūr al- Sālikīn* for the curriculum that was taught at the higher levels.

[476] *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, p. 257; Sayyid 'Ali, f. 6a. *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. ; Śuka, p. 380

[477] Scoffing at the upper class Hindus, who imitated the dishes introduced by the Muslims, the contemporary Sanskrit chronicler, Śuka says, "Even when the wealthy people saw the effects of sumptuous eating, they did not give up their evil desire for food." Śuka, p. 380.

[478] Śrīvara, p. 235; Śuka, p. 420; *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 282.

[479] Śrīvara, p. 192; For the archaeological evidence, see the tomb of Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn's mother and *Mazār-i-Salātīn*, both situated at Srinagar.

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Thirdly, as mentioned above, the upper classes, barring a section of *brāhmanas*, were people of light religion. Mundane rather than religious considerations guided their approach to life. Given the utilitarian value of conforming to Islamic life- style, the priority before them, therefore, was to look as Muslims rather than as Hindus or Buddhists. This explains why the Sanskrit chroniclers have mainly singled out the rulers, nobles and merchants for disregarding *Śastras*[480] and acting as fore-runners of the local population in imitating the 'Great Tradition'.[481] Even those who showed a strong disliking for Islam, did not hesitate in adopting those cultural facets of the new religion which were considered necessary for maintaining or improving their material position.[482] Lastly, the adoption of the new culture, though not new religion, entailed the resourcefulness of the prospective acceptors. Only a well off person could afford time and money to adopt the new life style and to receive new education – a premier mode of Islamic acculturation.

The following lamentations of the contemporary Sanskrit chroniclers sufficiently show rapid conforming of the upper caste/class Hindus to the values of the *reference group* culture – Islam:

> Whenever the people of this country forsook their old customs owing to the religious changes, they were generally punished by calamities. *Once upon a time some merchants of the city, who were the favourites of the Mausulas (Muslims) but who had followed the customs of Hindus from their birth, killed cows within the city. But when these wicked men had eaten the flesh of the kine, the part of the city where the animals had been slaughtered caught fire as if to purify itself.*[483] [emphasis added]
>
> In the reign of the King Shri Jaina (Zain al-' Ābidīn) the subjects were devoted to the study of six schools of philosophy and were attached to their own religion. They were fearless and did not suffer from the six calamities (excess of rain, drought, destruction of crops by ants, locusts and birds and the approach of an invader). But the customs of the country were injuriously affected by the base acts of the subjects when that king went to heaven, and so the destruction of the men came to pass. This is my opinion. *Some merchants, for instance, discarding the customs which befit Hindus, killed a cow within the city and ate its meat. Sons are now fond of the Mausulas (Muslims) and are ashamed to follow the Shostra*

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480 Śrivara, pp. 234, 319.

481 Jonarāja, pp. 26-27.

482 Śrivara, who warns the people against adopting Islamic culture, himself learnt Persian. Śrivara, pp. 135-136.

483 Ibid., pp. 234-35.

> *which was followed by their forefathers. Men of four castes had graced the kingdom in former days, but latterly the people had gradually adopted blamable practices and the ceremonies prescribed for special days in the Puranas came to be forgotten year by year. Why should not the people whose custom is bad suffer calamities?*[484] [emphasis added]
>
> Surely the Brahmans at this time did not do the duties of their caste and Somachandra (Musa Raina) was the person to induce them to disregard the performance of their duties.[485]
>
> It was on account of the association of the people with the Turuskas that they did not give up their fondness for dress, land and food, the last of which brought in punishment on them, in as much as they had to place themselves hereafter under medical treatment. Even when the wealthy people saw the effects of sumptuous eating they did not give up their evil desire for food.[486]

While these sardonic remarks of the obstinate *brāhmanas* clearly bring out the fast emulation of the Islamic life style by the masses in general and the upper classes in particular, it is remarkable to see that even those *brāhmanas* such as Śrivara, who showed no approbation for Islam, were enamoured of the all pervasive Islamic culture, though without conforming to it. Impressed by the grandeur of *Jāmi' Masjid* and the congregational prayers offered and *aurād* and *na't* recited in chorus by the Muslim devotees who assembled there in large numbers, especially on Fridays and 'Id days, Śrivara writes approvingly:

> The Masjeda [*Jāmi' Masjid*] was a spacious building, extending on all sides and was always white-washed. It was like the embodiment of the fame of King Shri Shekandhera [Sulṭān Sikandar]. It was within this building that crowds of worshippers used to fall down and rise at prayers, imitating the high waves of Sangeravara. It was here that the *yavanas* chanted mantras and looked graceful like a thousand lotuses with humming bees. It was here that on Fridays, worshippers issued from the four doors on the four sides, so that it seemed as if the *mlecchas* who had been buried were coming out! It was here that the four high minarets looked graceful like supports of virtue, as if virtue had left his own place and descended to this spot to witness if the people observed the rules of religion It was here that the sun shone like the umbrella of gold; as if he came hither to listen to the vanities of the world. Such was the great building which towered to the sky and was decorated with wonderful sculptures and which appeared like a fortress for the preservation of

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[484] Ibid., pp. 319-20.

[485] Śuka, p. 339.

[486] Ibid., p. 380.

> the faith of the *mleccha* king. It was here that in times of the *edha* (ʻĪd) and other festivities, the *mleccha* people used to gather in crowds and observed the rites of religion with devotion.[487]

These glowing remarks about a Muslim institution and the religious practices of the Muslims by the conservative *brāhmana*, who otherwise attributed all the calamities of the time to conversion to Islam, allude to some breach affected in the citadel of orthodoxy by the booming Islamic civilization. This attitudinal flexibility, though limited to appreciating some attractive features of Islam, was bequeathed by one generation to another generation which stretched it further to the point of accepting it as their faith.

Here it is important to note that the cultural superiority of Islam won four types of converts: One, those who in one leap adopted Islam in order to maintain or improve their position. The second category of converts comprised those who crossed two stages for the ultimate acceptance of Islam. They first imitated only some cultural aspects of Muslims without accepting Islam as their faith. But while responding to this new culture they showed so much flexibility that they were thoroughly assimilated into the Islamic culture even to the point of total rejection of Brāhmanism. For example, we find them killing cows and taking beef.[488] For such people it was no taboo to embrace the new faith especially when it was also the faith of the *reference group*. Moreover, for such people there was no place in Hinduism; and Islam was eagerly waiting for them to repair the social consequences of ritual pollution caused by the breaking of laws or taboos of the caste. The third set of converts were those whose parents showed partial identification, the sons showed nominal regard for their religion and the third generation considered it outmoded to remain within the fold of their ancestors.[489] Finally, it was the local non-Muslim girls, who considered it a status symbol to marry the highly respectable immigrant Muslims or who were offered to the latter by their parents considering it a social and religious honour. The local girls either embraced Islam before entering into the wedlock of the Muslims or were Islamized gradually in the company of their Muslim husbands.[490]

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[487] Śrivara, pp. 235-36.

[488] Ibid., pp. 234-35, 319.

[489] Ibid., pp. 319-20

[490] See *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 213 sqq. Besides, until Sultān Zain al-ʻĀbidīn we find all Muslim rulers having non-Muslim wives.

Fluid Religious Milieu

In a discussion of (ostensibly) sudden and unprepared conversions of individuals in Islamic mysticism A. R. Nicholson writes: "All these phenomena however sudden they may seem, are the climax of an interior conflict that perhaps only makes itself known at the moment when it is already decided".[491] This is what exactly holds good for conversions to Islam in Kashmir. The religious milieu of Kashmir had reached such a stage of transition characterized by creative tension generated by endogenous and exogenous factors that to a powerful religion, like Islam, it needed only to turn the tide in its favour.

The two religions, the dominant Hinduism and the enfeebled Buddhism, which Islam encountered in Kashmir were essentially a mixture of different beliefs and practices drawn from various belief systems, some local and some extraneous. As a matter of fact, the religious life was in a state of constant fluidity, where the people adopted new cults and beliefs without any apparent sense of conflict. That the Kashmiris had long been used to assimilating new religious beliefs without completely parting their ways with the past is evidenced by the syncretic nature of faiths and cults they had believed in from time to time. For instance, the phallic worship, the cult of fertility and the Nāga worship – the primitive forms of worship in Kashmir – came to be assimilated into Brāhmanic and non-Brāhmanic cults in such a way that they formed indispensable features of them.[492] The same is the case with Buddhism. It was so much influenced by the theistic and pantheistic cults in Kashmir that it was reduced to idolatry and polytheism. It developed a sacred pantheon of gods and goddesses analogous to those of the Śaivas and other Hindu sects. And with it many metaphysical ideas and theistic concepts associated with Śiva and his consort and the other Brāhmanical gods and goddesses had been transformed to Buddhism.[493] Śaiva practices and beliefs were so permeated into Buddhism that some scholars believe that Kashmiri Buddhism may aptly be called Śaiva Buddhism.[494] Buddhism also left a deep imprint upon Hinduism, so much so that we not only find Hindu rulers building and endowing

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[491] R. A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, p. 9.

[492] To quote Abu'l Fazl, " In seven hundred places there are graven images of snakes which they worship and regarding which wonderful legends are told". *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, II (Eng. tr. Jarrett), p. 354. For the other primitive practices integrated in different cults, which existed in Kashmir on the eve of the introduction of Islam in Kashmir, See *Śaivāgamas*, pp. 164 sqq.

[493] J. N. Ganhar and P.N Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, pp.61-62, 146-158.

[494] Ibid., p. 107-8.

Buddhist *stupas* and *viharas* with the same zeal and liberality as they showed towards the shrines of Śiva and Viśnu,[495] but the *Nīlamatapurāna*, the canonical authority for Brāhmanical cult in Kashmir, directly prescribes the celebration of Buddha's birthday as a great festival. "His statue is then to be worshipped according to the rites of the Sakyas or Buddhist ascetics, the latter themselves are to be honoured with presents and the *caityas* to be decorated".[496]

To be sure, each of the cults – Śaivism, Tantricism, Viśnavism and other different sects – that prevailed in Kashmir at the advent of Islam-was an amalgam of different beliefs; and all of them shared some common features.[497] Writing about the distinct number of Viśnu images in the famous sun temple of Kashmir, Martand, Robert E. Fisher remarks, "Were it not for the traditional popularity of the sun-god cult in north-western India and the name of the temple being Martand, this structure might today be judged to have been dedicated to Vishnu, so prominent are the images of that deity."[498]

Alongside the fact that the beliefs and deities of one group were often incorporated in the cosmology of other groups, Kashmir was a world of shifting beliefs and social allegiances. We not only find people shifting from Hinduism to Buddhism and *vice versa*, but what is equally interesting is the emergence of a number of cults, both within Buddhism and Hinduism. Although Śaivism was the dominant faith of Kashmir at the time of the penetration of Islam in the Valley, there were different Śaiva sects, each following its own *ācāra* (code of conduct). The different *ācāras* followed by different sects were: *Vamācāra*, *Dakśinācāra*, *Vedācāra*, *Vaiśnavācāra*, *Śaivācāra*, *Siddhantācāra*, *Kaulācāra*, *Samayācāra* and *Trikācāra*.[499] Similarly we find different sects having their own respective pantheon.[500] True, the religious changes in Kashmir and the emergence of a number of cults within the Hindu religion make it clear that Hinduism, with which Islam mainly came face to face, was in a process of evolution and in constant fluidity.

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[495] See *Rājataranginī*, iv. 188, 189, 200, 507; vi. 303, 304; viii. 3318.

[496] *Nīlamatapurāna*, 697-703.

[497] See *Śaivāgamas*, op.cit., pp. 26, 82-83, 171-72, 207, 227, 250, 259.

[498] Robert E. Fisher, "Stone Temples", in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, p. 36.

[499] *Śaivāgamas*, pp. 274-77.

[500] Ibid. Also, see Abu'l Fazl, *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, Vol. II (tr. Jarrett), p. 354; S. C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, pp. 168-184.

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From the eleventh century onwards absorption of some new elements of "*Darad, Bhutta* and *Mleccha* (Muslim)" religion and culture by Hindus became much pronounced.[501] The assimilation was so thorough that Hindu - Muslim marriages were a normal feature – not even frowned upon by the die-hard *brāhmanas*. Kōta Rani's marriage with Rinchana, a Buddhist turned Muslim ruler and her re-marriage with the Hindu ruler has been recorded by the contemporary *brāhmana* chronicler, Jonarāja, as a routine matter.[502] The same is the case with his description of matrimonial relations between Shāh Mīr and the local nobility.[503] The trend accelerated after the establishment of the Sultanate as we find that the Sultāns had generally non-Muslim wives.[504]

Given the situation, it appears that to the general Kashmiris religion was not something sacred that could not be changed or altered. They had been changing the faiths and cults over time. In such circumstances adoption of Islam was not any extraordinary novelty which could be resisted by their habit of mind. Additionally, their openness to respond to new religions, philosophies and cultures and then to amalgamate them in their belief system must have made the acceptance of the new faith simply a means of tapping another source of supernatural energy – an addition of another element to a syncretic complex.

This is not all. The sources show that Hinduism was burdened with serious crises leading to the emergence of three broad religious and intellectual trends: (a) Religious laxity: feeble hold of religion upon its adherents (b) Heterodoxy: open defiance of some basic elements of Brāhmanism and (c) Atheism: total rebellion against Brāhmanism.

On account of the impact of various religious, philosophical and cultural trends Brāhmanism had suffered serious erosions to the extent that minus a handful of *brāhmanas* it was practically nothing but a hollow belief. Extreme kind of flexibility of *Varnāśramadharma*,[505] persecution of *brāhmanas*, 'gods of the earth',[506] spoliation of temples,[507] revoking of *agrahāras*[508] and imposing taxes upon *brāhmanas*,[509] killing of cows and eating of beef,[510] entering into matrimonial relations with other religious and culture groups,[511] absence of any regard for *sati* among the general populace,[512] taking of arms by *brāhmanas*,[513] drinking of wine by *brāhmana gurus* while singing their chants,[514] conjugal life of ascetics and their possession of lands,[515] 'revising of traditional doctrines by texts of their own by ignorant *gurus*',[516] etc., only point to an extreme form of religious laxity of the period. That is why to our contemporary Sanskrit chroniclers it was a *Kali Yuga*.[517] Also that is why according to al-Birūni, a Kashmiri *brāhmana* was impatient to commit the *Vedas* into writing for fear of being forgotten by the religiously lax Hindu society.[518] In the given situation acceptance of Islam was a matter of loosening rather than abandoning a faith.

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[501] "The popular tradition" quoted by Kalhana that "Miharkula re-established pious observances of this land which, overrun by impure Daradas, Bhuttas and Mlecchas, had fallen off from the sacred laws" (*Rājataranginī*, i, 312-16) is seemingly a concoction. This seems to have been tailored by the *brāhmanas* to make the people believe that even a barbarian like Miharkula did not tolerate the change caused by these alien elements in the existing religio-social order of Kashmir. Even from a cursory glance over the pages of *Rājataranginī*, it becomes clear that during Kalhana's own time there was a great influx of *Daradas, Bhuttas* and *Mlecchas* into Kashmir, which might have exercised great influence upon the belief system of Kashmiris, to the shock of the *brāhmanas*.

[502] Jonarāja, pp. 18,24.

[503] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

[504] Ibid., pp. 42, 43, 58, 71, 86.

While on the one hand the people in general were showing open disregard to some basic tenets of *dharma*, on the other a section of the Hindu intelligentsia had launched a sustained movement against idolatry, animism, polytheism, ritualistic form of worship, *Varnāśramadharma* and against the self-conceited notion of the *brāhmanas*.[519] Since Brāhmanism revolved round these beliefs,

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505 See *supra*, p. 183.
506 *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, iv. 122; vii. 1229.
507 Supra, pp. 151-52.
508 Supra, p. 154.
509 Jonarāja, p. 16. Some kings imposed even corvee upon *brāhmanas*. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, vii. 1088
510 *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, vii. 1232; Śrivara, pp. 319.
511 Jonarāja, pp. 26-27.
512 Cf. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, iii. 123; v. 220-26; vi. 107, 195 sqq; viii. 2334-37. See also Kṣemendra, *Samayamātṛkā*, 11.21 ff. The rarity of *sati* among the people was probably owing to the influence of Tantricism which strongly forbids immolation of woman with her husband. That *sati* was restricted among a section of *brāhmanas* and *kṣatriyas* only, see also Krishna Mohan, *Early Medieval History of Kashmir*, pp. 230-235.
513 *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, vi. 9; vii. 91, 675; viii. 1071.
514 Ibid., vi. 10.
515 Ibid.
516 Ibid., vi. 11.
517 Kalhana, who calls his times as *Kali Yuga*, is sullied by the weakness of the 'sacred law'. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, viii. 2238
518 *Kitāb al- Hind*, II, pp. 126-27.
519 Jayalal Kaul, *Lal Ded*, pp. 15-16.

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practices and institutions, the emergence of heterodox movement was tantamount to challenging the very basis of it. In this way they considerably facilitated the job of the Muslim preachers, especially when the sailent features of the movement were akin to those of Islamic mysticism – so akin that the famous protagonist of this movement, Lalla, has been elevated to the position of *Rabi'a Thani* by some Muslim saints.[520]

An extremist view against Brāhmanism was taken by a section of the people. They were 'athiests', not beleiving in God at all. These elements had so much made their presence felt in the society that it was one of the important issues debated in the royal court.[521] Samkaravarman (883- 902) 'failed to stem the tide of athiests' during his reign. A religious synod, possibly summoned at the instance of the king and the queen, could not check these elements.[522] Ksemendra cautions the king that he should not appoint 'athiests' as *sabhyas* (Jurors) as "those who deny the existence of God, they pollute the company of the believers".[523] About King Simhadeva (1286 - 1301) Jonarāja says "By keeping company with bad men the king became devoid of his belief in God".[524]

Taking this religious and intellectual scenario into account, Islam had not to tread a difficult path in Kashmir. The tendency of faithlessness probably emanated from disbelief in flabby polytheism and arid pedantry and mystic cobwebs of the contemporary dominant discourses. By vehmently attacking polytheism and idolatry and by presenting Islam as a down to earth credo,[525] the Muslim preachers channelised the inquisitiveness of the sensitive souls and won them to their side.

Islamization through Accommodation

For those to whom pre-Islamic culture was an emotional question and were reluctant to completely part their ways with it, the Muslim preachers adopted a policy of expediency by taking recourse to accommodation, adjustment and conformity. During preaching and teaching among the people, both by precept and example, the chief priority of the preacher was to win the hearts of the people in favour of Islam, but without making them immediately part with the shibboleths of their past – a proposal that was likely to stick in their gizzards. Thus the preachers did not even ask the prospective converts to change their names or to give up pagan practices. That is why for a long period we find the convert Muslims carrying pre-conversion names,[526] not undergoing circumcision[527] and not even giving up *shirk*[528] (polytheism). However, once a person became the disciple of a *pīr*, a process of Islamic acculturation started with it, but the *pīr* avoided to be pettifogging. He not only refrained from touching the emotional "non issues" but even sometimes justified them.[529] Once the attitudes and the mentality of the convert fell in line with the teachings of a Muslim saint and presented a sharp contrast to what was preached by the *brāhmanas*, he either himself or at a slight suasion of someone gave up the one-time emotional practices. Thus, while in the initial phase of our period the converts generally carried local names, in the later phase we have Muslims mainly with Muslim names.[530]

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[520] Mullā 'Ali Raina, *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifin*, ff. 37a-38a.

[521] Mankha, Śrīkanthacarita, sarga XXV, (Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, p. 62).

[522] *Agamadambara*, IV, (Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, p. 71).

[523] Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, p. 179.

[524] Jonarāja, p. 14.

[525] For a best example how the Muslim preachers focused on solving the basic problems of the people and the society, see *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī.

That Islamization through accommodation proved considerably useful is amply evidenced by the emergence of what may be called *cultural mediators* and the outstanding popularity won by them among the people; largely because they mediated Islam to them, as far as possible, in their own *Weltanschauung*. Of these *mediators* the most prominent were the Muslim Rishis who besides using *Kāshur* as a vehicle to pull down the language barricade for creating a rich Islamic

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[526] A few names of the Muslim nobles and the Muslim Rishis mentioned in the political chronicles and hagiological literature, showing changelessness of names even after conversion to Islam, are reproduced here:

Names of the nobles:

Ladi Māgray, Devī Ganaī, Langar Chak, Kājī Chak, Ladī Raina, Chanī Raina, Pāndū Chak, Shankar Raina, Hilmat Chak, Gadaī Malik, Lohar Malik, Regī Chak, Tāzī Bhat, Tāzī Chak, Seh Chak, Zeitū Chak, Kānjī Raina, Nūnī Ganaī, Nājī Nāyak, Lohar Malik, etc.

Names of the Rishis:

Ludah Mal, Lankar Mal, Shankar Rishi, Lacham Rishi, Rūpī Rishi, Hardī Rishi, Ratan Rishi, Sanghī Rishi, Shangā Bībī, Gangā Bībī, etc.

[527] *Tuhfat a l-Ahbāb*, pp. 220-22

[528] Ibid., p. 200-222.

[529] Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Rīshi nāma*, ff. 64b-82a

[530] Of the Qur'ānic names that were in vogue in medieval Kashmir, mention may be made of Mūsa, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf, Dā'ūd, Sulayman, etc. Persian names like Nauroz, Bahrām, Sanjar, Rāhat, Sāliha, Khatoon were also common. The vast majority carried 'unimpeachably Muslim names' as Muhammad, Ahmad, Ghaffār, Karīm, Razzāq, Ghanī, 'Ali, Hasan, Husain, etc.

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tradition, opted for local idioms, symbols and images to bring the alien religion closer to the masses. The founder of the Muslim Rishis, Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, not only preferred the local term *rishi* for the order he founded as well as for denoting the enviable models of piety[531] but, more significantly, his didactic poetry is characterized by profuse usage of local religious idioms as *avatar*, *deva*, *nirgunna*, *prān*, *pāp*, *pun*, *surug*, *ahankār*, *krōdh* and the like,[532] to the extent that it becomes very difficult for a modem Kashmiri Muslim to understand the Shaikh's earliest available poetry, preserved by Bābā Nasīb al-Dīn Ghāzi in his *Nūr- nāma*.[533]

Apart from the Muslim Rishis using the local language and local idioms and symbols, their teachings and practices were so identical with the Hindu and Buddhist Rishis of yore that a Muslim Rishi would have simply appeared to the people a rejuvenated erstwhile Rishi, as the former Rishis had degenerated into ordinary worldly ascetics.[534] Initial demands even on the *brāhmana* ascetics to enter the fold of Muslim Rishis were minimal. After all, a Muslim Rishi lived a celibate life, had no home and hearth, owned no property, commanded chastity, abstained from sweet nourishment, was strictly vegetarian, did not eat even green vegetables, and ate, clothed and sought shelter just for barest survival.[535] Hence to become a follower of a Muslim Rishi, a prospective convert had just to accept the existence of one God, other things remaining almost the same. Even the call of one God was not something new to the people considering that the Kashmiri Śaivites had already bruited about monotheistic (*advaita*) doctrine.[536]

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[531] For instance, consider these famous verses of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn:

The first Rishi was the Prophet Muhammad,;
The second in order was Hazrat Uways;
The third was Zulka Rishi;
The fifth was Rum Rishi;
The sixth in order was Hazrat Miran;
The seventh (me) is miscalled a Rishi.
Do I deserve to be called a Rishi? What is my name?

(*Kulliyāt-i Shaikh al-' Alam*, op.cit., p. 33. The English translation is by Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, p.45.)

[532] For such terms, usages and imageries, see Ibid.

[533] Bābā Nasīb al-Dīn Ghāzī, the sixteenth-seventeenth century Suhrawardī saint and a great admirer of Shaikh Nūr al- Dīn is the first to have recorded the poetry of the Shaikh in his famous *Nūr- nāma*.

[534] Cf. *Rājatarangini*, VI, 10.

[535] For details, see *Sūfism in Kashmir*, op.cit., and *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, op.cit.

[536] Cf. J. C. Chatterji, *Kashmir Śaivism*, Srinagar (reprint) 1962: B.N. Pandit, *Aspects of Kashmiri Śaivism* and also his *Specific Priclples of Kashmiri Śaivism*.

While the Rishis were unintentionally working as *cultural mediators*, rooted as they were in pre-Islamic cultural heritage of Kashmir, there is also the evidence of the emergence of *conscious mediators* who self-consciously and deliberately engaged themselves in constructing a popular tradition for Kashmiri Muslims by investing Islamic meanings and symbolism into the local social and cultural mores. In this context one may refer to the sixteenth-seventeenth century Suhrawardī Sūfīs represented by the saint-scholar, Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, who justified the Rishis' celibacy, vegetarianism, non-injury to animals, abstention from eating meat, garlic and onion and the popular belief in "Nāgas" by putting an Islamic veneer on them.[537] So much had they realized the crucial importance of syncreticism as a necessary stage in the process of Islamization that Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī cautions the '*ulamā'* against raising hue and cry at seeing a *bida*'(innovation) without realizing its significance to the cause of Islam.[538]

The Muslim preachers had not to make many innovations in Kashmir, thanks to the Islamic culture that was forged in Persian and Central Asain environment bringing it either close to the local culture or providing a suitable alternative to it. For example, the practice of group *dhikir* and singing of *na't* and *manqabat* and holding of *mahfil-i sama'*, which had become very popular forms of worship long before Islam was introduced in Kashmir,[539] provided apt substitutes to the habitual *mantra* reciters and to those whom singing and dancing figured among the most emotive and soulful religious rituals.[540] This is the reason that Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, despite favouring both inward and outward *dhikir*,[541] permitted the Kashmiri Muslims to recite group *dhikir* and even prescribed his own compiled *aurād* – *Aurād-i Fatthiyah*, for its loud recitation in chorus in mosques every morning.[542] The practice had proved so useful in the process of Islamization that Sayyid Ahmad Kirmānī, who entered Kashmir in the sixteenth century and forbade the people from reciting *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* aloud in mosques, had to withdraw his *fatwā* after realizing its baneful implications upon Islamic acculturation.[543] Likewise, the local peoples' age-old practice of *guru* worship and undertaking pilgrimages to perform various rituals at the *asthapanas*, temples, *vihāras* and *mathas* for satisfying their spiritual yearnings and fulfilling worldly ambitions had already been channelized in Persian and Central Asian environment towards *pīr* tradition, saint cult and shrine rituals.[544]

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[537] Khākī, *Rishī nāma*, ff. 64a-82b.

[538] *Qasida-i Lāmiyya* (Printed text under the title, *Hardī Rishī*), p. 74.

[539] See infra, pp.262-67.

[540] *Śaivāgamas*, op.cit., pp. 129-30. To the contemporary Sanskrit chronicler, Śrivara, reciting of *aurād* and *na't* looked like 'chanting of mantras' and the chanters like a 'thousand lotuses with humming bees'. Śrivara, p. 235.

[541] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, *Risala-i Aurādiyya*, f. 39a.

[542] Sayyid 'Ali, *Tārīkh-i Kashmir*, ff. 31ab.

[543] Ibid.

Needless to repeat, the religious mentality of the Kashmiri people was dominated, as elsewhere, by 'an instinctive search for divinity or religiosity in the supernatural and fantastic'.[545] Hence 'the truth of religion was to be vindicated not so much through its dogmas and teachings as through the ability of its heroes to rise to superhuman and supernatural heights'.[546] The Prophet and his followers had already encountered this problem in Arabia[547] as well as at other places.[548] Since this was an inescapable situation, Sūfī missionaries and their disciples had to focus more on supernatural aspect of Islam and its heroes to 'satisfy within a monotheistic religion a polytheistic need'. And no wonder, that the lives of the Muslim saints of our period are embroidered lavishly with miraculous feats to cater to the popular demand. The Muslim saints also used the same means – prayers and amulets to recruit the supernatural aid[549] – that had won the following to the non-Muslim religious leadership.

In other spheres, too, the Muslim preachers allowed themselves to be guided by expediency. For example, they did not make *pardah* mandatory for all Muslim women regardless of its practicability among working class women and those who wanted to receive education, as it was the religious obligation upon every Muslim woman to obtain (Islamic) education.[550] As such the institution of *pardah* was

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[544] See Chapter VI.

[545] I have quoted the words of Asim Roy, the author used in the context of Medieval Bengal (Asim Roy, *Islam in South Asia*, p. 24) because, as we have seen, exactly the same situation obtained in Kashmir too.

[546] Ibid.

[547] Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, Vol. II, P. 261.

[548] Von Grunebaum, *Muhammadan Festivals*, p. 68. That the same situation was faced by our prominent Muslim preachers before their coming to Kashmir, see Nūr al-Dīn Ja'far Badakhshī, *Khulāsat al-Manāqib* and Mullā Haidar Badakhshī, *Manqabat al-Jawāhir*.

[549] *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, p. 436; *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, op.cit., II, pp. 68, 90-91.

[550] Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī quotes Imam Ghazzāli, "It is obligatory upon a (Muslim) husband to impart religious eduction to his wife. And if he does not fulfil this duty, the Muslim woman is within her rights to come out of her home to learn the knowledge of *Sharī'ah* from some one else; and in this she is not bound to seek the permission of her husband. And if she fails to do so, she commits a sin." *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. 1, pp. 426-27.

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interpreted with a view to accommodate its spirit as well as to make room for man-woman interaction. In this context let us quote Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī who justifies the association of an alien *(na-mahram)* but pious man with an alien but chaste woman:

> That look has not been forbidden which is free from sexual instinct ... It is rightly mentioned in the commentary of *Waqayah* that "Lawfulness of a look is subject to be devoid of sensuality."[551]

Again, this Sūfi-scholar quotes Imām Abū Hanīfa:

> It is permissible for a woman to appear before a *na-mahram* (alien person) who is pious, but it is absolutely unlawful for her to make an appearance before a *mahram* (a relation whom one cannot legally marry) who is scoundrel and adulterer.[552]

No wonder, then, that barring a few upper class families, *pardah* has been completely absent among Kashmiri Muslim women, who, instead of wearing *burqa'* (veil) and remaining indoors, wore the traditional local scarf,[553] or the newly introduced *qasāba*[554] and mixed freely with men.

The continuity of the old practices is also marked in the family norms and succession rules of the Kashmiri Muslims. For example, in Islam the relationship of parenthood cannot be created artificially by adoption or legitimation. While emphatically ruling out any type of secondary sonship, Islam recognises only a child born of a lawful wedlock.[555] However, among Kashmiri Muslims adoption is a common practice. This is obviously because adoption of sons was a deep-rooted practice in Kashmir. Hinduism necessitates a parent to have a son to perform different religious rituals to save the father from Hell and famishment of the other world.[556] Since it is not possible for every parent to be gifted with a son, we, therefore, find twelve kinds of secondary sons mentioned in the *Dharam Sutras* and *Smrtis*. One of these twelve types of secondary sons is adopted son.[557] And it was this type of son who was preferred by the Kashmiri

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[551] Ibid., p. 430.

[552] Ibid., p. 427.

[553] Scarf, locally known as *da'j*, was used during the pre-Muslim period. *Samayamātrkā*. Vide *The World of Courtesans*, op.cit., p. 181.

[554] See infra, p.289.

[555] Qur'ān, *Surah Ahzāb* (XXXIII) 425.

[556] Manu calls a male child *putra*, meaning the deliverer from Hell (put). *Aitareya Brahmana*, VII, 31. Vide, Afzal Qutb, *A Treatise on Competing Faith Oriented Family Norms (Hindu, Christian and Islamic Principles)*, Kashmir 1990, pp. 119-21.

[557] Ibid.

Hindus,[558] to supplant a natural son – a son procreated by a man himself. The practice of adopting sons was so deeply embedded in the social and psychological framework of the people that the Muslim missionaries do not seem to have made it an issue, which is why adoption is common among Kashmiri Muslims and, barring a very few, Kashmiri Muslims are generally ignorant of the fact that Islam does not sanction adoption.

Similar is the case with the rules of succession as here again custom overrides the Islamic law.[559] For instance, Sunni law enables a Muslim to determine the devolution of upto one-third of his property after his death provided the beneficiary is a non- heir. Shi'i law, however, recognizes no distinction between the heir and non-heir beneficiary. Regarding the rest of two-thirds property Islam mandates that this property should go to those whom law treats as best entitled to it and personal preference of the deceased in respect of this portion of property has no scope. By contrast, the customary law of testamentary succession in Kashmir rests firmly upon the freedom of the individual to determine the devolution of his property after his demise.[560]

Under Sunni law if a man dies leaving behind his wife, his son, his father and daughter, the wife will get 1/8, the father 1/6 and the rest will be divided between the son and the daughter, the son getting double of what the daughter gets. But under the customary law of Kashmir, the son succeeds to the whole property to the exclusion of all others.[561] The only exceptions are unmarried daughters and the *khāna nishīn* daughters (those daughters who are kept at home with their husbands). Those daughters, who were married and lived with their husbands outside the father's home, could not claim a share of their father's estate.[562] Even today, if a daughter of the latter category claims a share of her parental property from her brothers, the society treats her with contempt. Similarly, a widow succeeds only in the absence of sons and male agnatic descendent. Even for her maintenance she is dependent upon sons and grandsons of her deceased husband. In contrast, under the Muslim law she is a primary heir and an independent owner of her share.

By quoting these continuities of the past we wish to emphasise the fact that the Muslim missionaries, while understanding the powerful role of mentality and value system of Kashmiri society, refrained from taking issue with the people to change in their entirety, as it would have impeded the progress of winning conversions.

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[558] Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 266.

[559] For details, see Sant Ram Dogra, *Code of Tribal Customs in Kashmir*.

[560] Muhammad Altaf Husain Ahangar, *Customary Succession Among Muslims*, pp. 134-152.

[561] Ibid.

[562] Ibid.

Missionary – Spatial Distribution

The possibilities of a social change in a society are enhanced by the presence of a large body of dedicated people in proportion to the size of the place. The larger the concentration of the missionaries with a commitment of achieving higher social goal, the greater is the possibility of change. The phenomenal success, which the conversion movement achieved in Kashmir, was no less due to the presence of a great number of zealous preachers of Islam in a very small-sized landlocked Valley. The Valley, which consisted of 2564 villages and one city, Srinagar,[563] witnessed hundreds of missionaries at one and the same time. Needless to recall, Sayyid 'Ali was accompanied by seven hundred disciples.[564] Similarly Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī's mission comprised three hundred missionaries.[565] Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī also entered the Valley with a large number of followers.[566] These immigrant missionaries settled not only in the capital city – *Shahr-i Kashmir* – but they also established their centres in different nooks of the Valley.[567] Besides those missioneries who settled down in Kashmir permanently, Islam was nourished by a constant stream of missionaries flowing back and forth between Kashmir and Persia and Central Asia.[568] The popular indigenous Sūfī movement, Rishi Movement, also had a ring of disciples all over the Valley.[569] According to Abu'l Fazl and Jahāngīr there were about 2000 Rishis committed to the cause of spreading the message of their Shaikh.[570] And so was the case with the Suhrawardī *silsila* which dominated the religious scene of Kashmir during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[571] This is besides the fact that throughout the Sultanate period there was a constant influx of Muslim fortune-seekers from Persia and Central Asia. Though they came to Kashmir and settled there for patronage they, however, played a great role as disseminators of Islamic culture.[572]

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[563] For a complete list of the number of villages during the medieval period, see *Dastur al-'Amal* also known as *Tārīkh-i Kalān*, compiled during the later period of the Sikh rule in Kashmir (1819-1846).

[564] Supra, pp. 57-58.

[565] Ibid., p. 62.

[566] Ibid., p. 69.

[567] See Appendix I.

[568] In this regard mention may be made of missionaries who after carrying out their work left the Valley. Even Sayyid 'Alī Hamdānī and Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī left the Valley after accomplishing their jobs.

[569] See Appendix III.

[570] *Ā'īn-i Akbarī* (Jarret) Vol. III p. 355; *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (Rogers and Beveridge), Vol. II, pp. 149-50.

[571] See Appendix II.

Role of Political Patronage

"God sent no prophet who did not enjoy the protection of his people," so goes the saying of Prophet Muhammad. "If this was the case with the prophets, who are among human beings those most likely to perform wonders" says Ibn Khaldun "one would (expect it to apply) all the more so to others. One cannot expect them to be able to work the wonder of achieving superiority without group feeling."[573] The same holds true of the Muslim preachers who worked in Kashmir. Although the Sultāns and the missionaries did not belong to the same kindred group, they did belong to the same culture and ideology which cemented the bonds between the two more securely than Khaldun's *'asabhiyya*.

There is no doubt that the conversion was mainly the handiwork of the Muslim preachers, but the fact remains that they would neither have been able to carry their mission nor to win converts had the state not provided them facilities to ensure their comfortable stay and to carry their work besides recognizing them as the highly revered section of the society[574] and providing them moral support for winning converts. All the preachers who came to Kashmir and all the Muslim institutions that sprang up during the period were provided with *madad'i ma'āsh* and *waqf* grants.[575] It was with the help of these land grants that the preachers were able to stay in the Valley and dedicate their lives and time to preaching and teaching of Islam.[576] *Khānaqāhs,* which were the biggest centres of the diffusion of Islam, were big recipients of land grants to meet the large expenses each of them incurred daily on food, clothing and other items.[577] As a matter of fact, Islam received state patronage and the Muslim preachers worked in a free, relieved and encouraging atmosphere. The state not only provided financial assistance to the preachers and their institutions, they also remodelled the administration to suit Islam. It made Persian the official language, Islamized the judiciary, gave highest positions mainly to Muslims (when a sizable section of Kashmiri nobility accepted Islam),[578] took upon itself to construct mosques, *madrasas* and *khānaqāhs* and provided every sort of encouragement to the Muslim preachers for winning peaceful conversions.

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[572] See supra, pp. 200-206.

[573] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, tr. Rosenthal, abridged and edited by N.J. Dawood, 1978, p.127.

[574] See Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 1a-2b, 3b, 24ab; *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb, passim, Bahāristān-i Shāhī, passim.* According to Jonarāja, Sultān Sikandar behaved like a servant before Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī (Jonarāja, p. 57). The venerated position which the preachers enjoyed among the Sultans can be gleaned from the fact that the cap, which Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī gave to Sultān Qutub al-Dīn, was worn by all the Sultāns under their crowns until that was buried with the body of Sultān Fateh Shāh as per his last will. The people had so much veneration for the cap that they regarded its burial inauspicious for the political fortune of Shāh Mīr dynasty. In fact, they attributed its downfall to the burial of the cap. Cf. Sayyid 'Ali f. 22b; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 11a.

[575] Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 2a, 3a, 5a, 14a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī* f.16a.

[576] Ibid.

The land and cash grants which the *brāhmanas* and their institutions had appropriated since early times were not altogether revoked as we find the *brāhmanas* and their institutions enjoying the same till late times.[579] But it is a fact that in the new circumstances, when a new section of religious class and new religious institutions were more relevant, the large number of grants enjoyed by the *brāhmanas* could not remain intact. It is significant to note that during the Hindu rajas there were, according to Kṣemendra Kṣemendra, not less than one thousand temples in each *vaisya* [medieval *parganā*], although a *vaisya* constituted not more than seventy-five villages.[580] Curtailment of the grants enjoyed by the *brāhmanas* and clear proclivity of the state towards the Muslim religious class and the Islamic institutions was natural in the new circumstances. With the decline in the property of the *brāhmana* guardians and propagators of Brāhmanical religion, there was a decline in their spiritual and moral standards too. It is, therefore, not surprising to find the representatives of the 'no changer' section of the *brāhmana* community blaming some *brāhmanas* for embracing Islam for economic gains[581] or lacking in 'brāhmanical spirit'.[582]

It was not only in the Valley that Hinduism lost political patronage; it had already lost it elsewhere too. Not only the *S'āhi* kingdom of Kabul but even the centre of Hinduism – Hindustan – had fallen to the Muslim armies some more than two hundred years before the Muslim Sultanate was established in Kashmir. Thus the Hindus of Kashmir who were already isolated and dejected owing to the loss of big centers of Hinduism to Muslims, were further demoralized and denuded once they lost the political power in Kashmir too. Hence they showed little reluctance in being assimilated by the new religion with all its glamour, globally political ascendancy and vast economic resources, which acted as its sources of publicity for all those who wished to improve their position.

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[577] For the enormous expenses the running of a *khānaqāh* entailed, see Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 13a, 23a; *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 282; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 17a.

[578] In the fifteenth century we find the ministerial portfolios mainly in the hands of the Muslims. Since by then the major sections of the hereditary noble class had embraced Islam, the Sultāns, unlike their predecessors, found no difficulty in appointing mainly the Muslims as their ministers.

[579] Jonarāja, pp. 87, 88; Śuka, p. 339; *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 265-66.

[580] *Lokaprakāsa*, p. 59 (Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, op.cit., p.160).

[581] Jonarāja, p. 60.

[582] Śuka, p. 353.

The preachers did not simply require the material and moral support of the rulers, they needed equally their avowed recognition of being the most respectable section of the society. To be sure, this was one of the essential prerequisites for the preachers to bring their personalities to bear upon the people. After all, the effectiveness of the advocates of change depends, among other things, upon the prestige of the advocate. True, the prestige of the preachers emanated from their outstanding scholarship and imposing saintly personality; it, nevertheless, required the recognition of the exalted stratum of the society to earn popularity. And the preachers got it profusely from the ruling section. We find the Sultāns according rousing reception to the incoming preachers[583] and changing their religious behaviour at their instance – even though it sometimes entailed divorcing one's wife and giving up the erstwhile life-style.[584] The rulers were particular in respecting their suggestions; and some even acted like 'slaves' before them.[585] They considered their gifts as a divine favour[586] and did not initiate any work without seeking their permission.[587] As a matter of fact, the Muslim preachers were accorded the most prestigeful position by the rulers, which set a seal on their being the *reference group*. The ruling class' veneration of the preachers not only created a mass psychology in favour of Islam, it also directly helped in winning conversions. To see how the masses imitated the rulers in matters of taking crucial religious decisions, it is interesting to quote a contemporary chronicler whose religious susceptibilities were greatly hurt by the success, Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī achieved in his mission:

چو مردم عام دیدند که تمام ارباب دولت درانجا (خانقاه شمس الدین عراقی)
رفته ایشان هم بطمع دینار رفته

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583 Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 2a, 3b.
584 Supra, p. 58.
585 Jonarāja, p. 57.
586 See supra, p.224, fn. 574.
587 Sayyid 'Ali, f. 24a. See also *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.11a; Haidar Malik, p. 42.

> When the common people saw the ruling class going there (to the *khānaqāh* of Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī) they, too, for worldly interests, followed in their footsteps.[588]

It is, therefore, not for nothing that all the zealous preachers like Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī and Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, centered their first attention towards making the rulers their devoted followers.

Group Conversion

The account of the conversion to Islam in Kashmir will be incomplete without the fact being mentioned that it was fundamentally a communal or group conversion, i.e., a big group followed the conversion of an individual. Understanding and appreciating this fact pre-supposes a clear comprehension of the social structure of the Kashmiri society at the time it encountered Islam.

The society of Kashmir was divided into distinctive kindred groups based on ethnic, kinship, caste and occupational considerations. In the Sanskrit works these groups are known as *kula*, *gotra*, *śrenī*,[589] or *varga*;[590] in Persian chronicles they are referred to as *qaum*, *qabīla* or *ta'ifa*[591] and in the pure local dialect the generic term *wand* denotes a kindred group. Each group was headed by the most respectable elder known in Sanskrit works as *kulaka* or *śrenīmukhya*,[592] in Persian chronicles *qabīladār*[593] and in Kashmiri *dhuth*.

It is interesting to observe that from the highest to the lowest rungs of the social ladder the society was divided into well-knit groups, each having full confidence and faith in its tribal head. Thus one does not only find the powerful tribes like Damaras, Lavanyas, Ekangas, Tantrians, Chandan, Māgrays, Chaks and others, but the *brāhmanas*, too, were divided into a number of tribes (*gotras*).[594] One finds even the *hānjīs* (boatmen) divided into tribes, each working under the command of its tribal head.[595] The division of society into ethnic, caste and professional groups, with group loyalties and each at the command of its leader, remained a social reality till late times as we find in the sixteenth century some eight hundred *brāhmana sardars* (leaders), each exercising complete control over at least one hundred families.[596]

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[588] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 24a.

[589] *Lokaprakāśa*, p. 5; *Nītikalpataru*, 130. 1. (Vide, *Kashmir Polity*, pp. 166, 178).

[590] *Śarvāgamas*, p. 85.

[591] *Kashmir Polity*, p. 85.

[592] *Lokaprakāśa*, p. 4; *Nītikalpataru*, p. 130.

[593] *Bahāristān-i-Shāhī*, *passim*.

[594] The Pandit community of Kashmir is still broken up into numerous *gotras*. To quote Walter Lawrence, the nineteenth century keen observer of Kashmiri society, "There are eighteen known gotras among the Levite Brahmans and 103 among the other Brahmans in Kashmir". For further details, see *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 304.

[595] Śrivara, p. 277.

Given the fact that each tribal head commanded the following of a large population, it was these heads who formed the power structure of the state from village to the central level according to their respective economic and muscle power. The village administration was run by the tribal heads (*kulaka*), usually five in number known as *pāncakula.*[597] The most powerful tribes ruled the *vaisya* (medieval *pargana*) known by the generic term *damara vaisya.*[598] In the capital city of Srinagar, the most powerful tribal heads, known as *pauramahattama*, were the kingmakers.[599]

Since the position of the head of the tribe hinged upon his being a powerful person vis-a-vis the other members of his group, he, needless to emphasise, formed the backbone of the tribe, both in terms of maintaining or improving its position. Thus when the head of the tribe took any decision, all the members of the tribe signed on the dotted line. Not surprisingly, then, we find all the members of the powerful noble groups: Lavanyas, Māgrays, Chaks, Tantrians, Dāmaras and all the working classes and menial groups as Muslims. A few Hindu and Muslim groups with common *krāms* (surnames) that have survived to us[600] probably show that over a period of time some tribes had so much multiplied in population that they were forced to scatter in various parts of the Valley. Both multiplication of the tribe and distance hamstrung the once kindred tribes and divided them into sub-groups having no harmony with one another. However, this was not the case with the well- knit tribes. That is why the *krāms* (surnames) of the majority of the Kashmiri Muslims are not shared by the surviving Pandit community of Kashmir.[601]

The 'feudal' formation of the agrarian relations also favoured group conversions. Consistent with this system a minuscule population, comprising hereditary landed aristocracy, was exercising a complete control over a vast area of land. Kalhana refers to these elements by a blanket term, *damaras*.[602] The trend was reinforced by the state through the instrument of land grants to its highest functionaries as well as the *brāhmanas* and their institutions. Such land assignments were known by the generic term *agrahāra*.[603] The *agrahāra* holder not only enjoyed all the resources of the area assigned or donated to him, but even the inhabitants – cultivators as well as artisans – of the area were transferred to him to meet his multifarious needs.[604] Under these circumstances the tillers as well as the landless occupational castes depended upon their 'lords' for survival. Obviously it was not possible for them to antagonize their masters if persuaded to follow in their footsteps in religious matters, especially when the change of faith would not invite any persecution, but, instead, help in improving their wretched condition.

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[596] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 43b

[597] *Lokaprakāśa*, p.4.

[598] For example, Rama Chandra, the lord of the district of Lār was the Commander-in-Chief of Suha Deva. *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.5a; Haidar Malik, p.36.

[599] *Kashmir Polity*, op. cit., p. 69.

[600] For instance, Bhat, Dār, Raina and Pandit.

[601] For example, Loan, Māgray, Tāntray, Wānī, etc.

The group conversions were also facilitated by the patriarchal-joint family system. It had been customary in Kashmir to live together in as large a family as possible; and to be a member of a big family had been a badge of social respectability till quite recent times.[605] The system of joint family existed not only among the masses but it was prevalent among the upper classes too. Kalhana says that when King Ananta resumed kingship after taking away powers from his son, Kalasa, the latter would regularly take his meals in presence of his parents and the Queen Suryamatī would make her daughters-in-law constantly do the work of slave girls and that they could not refuse even to smear the house floor with cow dung.[606] While it had been a normal feature of a Kashmiri family to live together as long as the parents were alive, it was socially deferential if the family lived together even after the demise of the parents. In such cases the eldest brother acted as the head of the family.[607] Besides having strong tradition of joint family system, the Kashmiri society was fundamentally a patriarchal society headed by the father; in the absence of the father by the eldest son. For economic reasons and also because of the deeply rooted custom, the family members as a rule strictly obeyed the decisions taken by the head of the family – the father. It is not, therefore, surprising to see that the father's conversion was taken as the conversion of the whole family.[608]

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602 For a detailed account about the *Dāmaras*, see M. A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol. II, pp. 304-308

603 *Rājataranginī*. i. 87, 88, 90, 96, 100; ii 55; iii 376, 481; iv. 9, 639; v. 23., 24, 170, 397, 403, 422; vi. 89. 336; vii. 182-185, 608, 698, 889, 908; viii. 2408, 2419, 2420, 3355

604 *Kashmir Polity*, p. 218

605 Based on my personal knowledge.

606 *Rājataranginī*, vii. 245, 249-50

607 Based on my personal knowledge

608 *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 216-217

Mass illiteracy and the consequent dependence of the people upon *gurus* and *brāhmanas* for accepting or rejecting a faith also accounted for group conversion. It hardly needs any emphasis that owing to caste system and mass economic poverty, the people in general were illiterate and, therefore, ignorant of religion. It was only the *brāhmanas* whose primary preoccupation of life was to study religious scriptures. Hence every single common man was tied to one or the other *guru* for religious guidance. Since the masses had no personal knowledge of religion and since they believed in it simply because the *gurus* followed it, the decision of the *gurus* with regard to religious matters was the decision of the masses as such. Thus when any *guru* embraced Islam for whatsoever reasons, he was followed by his whole band of followers. This is borne out by some anecdotes recorded in our sources. Sayyid 'Ali, the author of *Tārīkh-i Kashmir*, says that when the great preacher, Sayyid 'Ali Hamadānī, convinced the famous *guru* of Kāli Mandir (at Srinagar) in favour of Islam, his conversion was followed by the conversion of four thousand people.[609] The situation did not undergo any appreciable change even after mass conversion to Islam. We find Bābā 'Ali Najjar, in the words of a contemporary, handing over his disciples to the charge of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, after the former accepted Shi'ism at the hands of the latter.

هر که از مریدان او (بابا علی) پیش وی آمد او را حواله آن مرد (شمس الدین عراقی) میکرد

Whosoever of his (Bābā 'Ali's) disciples came to him,
he handed him over to the charge of that man [Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī].[610]

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[609] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 5a.
[610] Ibid., f. 24a.

5: The Nature of Mass Conversion

To be sure, by the end of the sixteenth century, Kashmir was a mass Muslim society. Yet the point at issue is: how far did the converts part their ways with the past and to what extent did they accept the new faith with its comprehensive code of life that addresses even the ordinary details of every day life besides enjoining on its followers to observe the Five Foundations of Islam? Fortunately the contemporary sources contain sufficient information for one to dwell upon this crucial question. And wherever the contemporary evidence is lacking or suffers from any gaps these are made up by the later sources, particularly by the vestiges of the past that continue to stay with the Kashmiri Muslim society till our own times.

After taking a close look at the Muslim society of Kashmir, one finds that Islam was received at different levels. The first was at the level of total acceptance of Islam introduced by the Persian and Central Asian Sūfī missionaries. Since these missionaries placed spirituality at the centre of their religious life, the complete inward acceptance of its spirit and principle produced great Sūfī personalities.[1] One also encounters another section of the people who, like the Sūfīs, made a relentless effort to be immaculate so that they would earn the love of God. However, in this they were more attracted by the *zabt-i nafs* teachings of the Sūfīs and the strong local tradition of renouncers who according to Marco Polo "observed strict abstinence in regard to eating, drinking and sex."[2] These native Sūfīs are known as Rishis, the indigenous term opted for by its illustrious founder, Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn Rishi.[3]

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[1] For an account of the local Sūfīs known as *Auliyā'-i Kashmir* (Saints of Kashmir), see Sayyid 'Alī, ff. 23a, 30b, 31a, 32a; A'zam Dīdmarī, *Wāqi'āt-i Kashmir*; Pīr Ḥasan Shāh, *Asrār al-Abrār* (Urdu tr. under the title, *Tadhkira al-Auliyā'-i Kashmir*).

[2] For valuable information supplied by Marco Polo about these local renouncers, see Chapter II, p.60, fn. 137.

[3] For a detailed study of the Rishis, see *Sūfism in Kashmir*, op. cit.; *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, op. cit.

The third category of Muslims were the *'ulamā'* who, while being *Shari'iah*-conscious, advocated strict adherence to the basic teachings of Islam. However, since the *'ulamā'* did not shun the ~~world, the~~ pressures of active life stained their reputation.[4] Then there were status-conscious Muslims mainly belonging to the upper strata of the society who adopted the Muslim way of life as a hallmark of superiority in the society, but without imbibing the spirit of Islam. They offered prayers, observed fasts, gave away alms, paid *mahr*, used Muslim dress, kept beard, constructed *khānaqāhas* and *madrasas*, revered the saints and visited the tombs; but in actual dealings of life they were guided by the material considerations rather ~~than by the~~ basic message and essence of Islam.[5]

Still, by all reckoning the aforesaid sections formed a very small group. To the predominant majority of the local population acceptance of Islam was little more than shifting of camps, without feeling obliged to fulfill the basic conditions that the other side otherwise entails on those who wish to become its members.

Since the general populace accepted Islam at the level of formal adhesion, there was no remarkable break with the past.[6] What is, however, more striking an example of the minimal acceptance of Islam by the masses is their lax religious behaviour and ~~even ignorance~~ of primary knowledge of their religion. Minus *Saum* (fast), compliance to the Five Pillars of Islam –*Tauhīd*, *Salāt*, *Saum*, *Zakāt*, and *Hajj* – has always remained peripheral to the religious behaviour of the Kashmiri Muslims.[7] It is not only in the sixteenth century that we find the zealous

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[4] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, Vol. I, p. 235; *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 377, 379, 381-382, 384-389.

[5] That the Sultāns and nobles were essentially guided by *maslahat* (expediency), worldly pleasures, *'adat* (custom) and the Persian theory of kingship, ~~see Kashmir~~ *Under the Sultans*, *passim*.

[6] For a similar conclusion arrived at by some keen European observers of Kashmir society, see Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab* (ed. Jervis), Preface; Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 286.

[7] The religious laxity of the Muslims attracted the attention of Walter Lawrence too. To quote him, "The Sunni Musalmans do not strike me as zealous or earnest in the profession of their faith. It is true that they observe very strictly the fast of Ramazan, but they do not keep Friday as a day of rest, and very few Kashmiris ~~make the~~ pilgrimage to Mecca, though the journey is now easy and does not cost more than Rs. 340/. In 1892 twenty-one Kashmiris went to Mecca and this was an unusually large number. I do not base my ideas as to the laxness of Kashmir's in religious duties merely on my own observations. Holy men from Arabia have spoken to me with contempt of the feeble flame of Islam, which burns in Kashmir, and the local Mullahs talk with indignation of the apathy of the people. In times of earthquake and cholera

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missionaries of Islam disquieted over the Kashmiri Muslims' ignorance of the basic tenets of Islam or their laxity towards observing them,[8] but even today the situation is not much different though considerable religious consciousness has been instilled among them over the past few decades thanks to the persistent efforts of the revivalists. No wonder, then, that even today the religious sermons mainly revolve round reminding the Muslims of observing the basic tenets of Islam. Like the Brāhmanic society, it is the hereditary religious class which, until quite recently, was expected to know the religious scriptures and to guide the Muslims on religious matters and perform the religious rites.[9] The general Muslims, both men and women, even today do not remember Qur'ānic verses to offer daily prayers. It is the saint and his tomb, and not the *Tauhidic* concept of Islam, that has been a more tangible and a more emotionally satisfying faith of Kashmiri Muslims. Even the Qur'ān is used just as a source of blessing to serve petty mundane interests rather than a revelation of divine law.[10] People flock to saints and *pīrs* not for guidance to seek the way to *Allāh* but for *ta'wīz* (amulets) and *tabarruk* (blessings) to cure an ailment or to fulfill a wish. It is not the Islamic law but the tradition and custom that governs the life of the people.[11] The concept of paying a share of parental property to daughters was heretical to the Hindu-Buddhist and tribal ethos of Kashmir. Therefore, it never received a favourable response in Kashmir.[12] *Mahr* was no doubt fixed but hardly paid in general cases.[13] The tribal custom of paying *bōg* (payment in cash or kind by the parents of the bridegroom to the parents of the bride) was too deep to be eradicated.[14] The Islamic system of banking (*muzāribat*) was no doubt introduced but the unchanged mentality of the people did not allow it to be a viable substitute of the old system of lending money

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the Kashmiri falls to his prayers and displays a wonderful activity in repairing shrines and mosques, but in fair and easy times he allows the mosque and the shrine to fall into ruins and pays very little attention to the Mullah". Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 285-86.

[8] *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 220-222, *Nūr-nāma* ff. 415-417ab.

[9] Based on my personal information.

[10] This is the reason that the Muslim revivalist movements, which have been striving hard for many decades now to change the mentality of the Kashmiri Muslims in favour of the *Shari'ah*, have not made much progress matching their struggle.

[11] For details, see Sant Ram Dogra, *Code of Tribal Customs in Kashmir*, N. K. Ganjoo, *Customary Law of Kashmir;* Mohd. Altaf Husain Ahangar, *Customary Succession Among Muslims.*

[12] For details, see Mohd Altaf Hussain Ahangar, *Customary Succession Among Muslims*, pp.134-152.

[13] Lawrence, p. 269.

[14] Ibid., p. 268.

on interest.[15] It was not the Islamic polity but the modified Persian theory of kingship that guided the statecraft.[16] The Islamic institutions such as *qāzi* and *shaikh al Islām* had no role in political matters. The social equity, which Islam stands for, could not be achieved owing to the continuity of the old attitudes. The ethical behaviour of the convert did not show any marked change. The Islamic vision of a just society by motivating the people to transcend narrow self-interests remained unrealized. Thus the famous Christian missionary, Tyndale Biscoe, does not make a flippant remark when he says: "In Kashmir anyway religion and life have nothing to do with one another".[17] As a matter of fact, in Kashmir a few conditions are required for claiming Muslim identity. They are Muslim name, Muslim burial, male circumcision, *nikāh*, abstention from consumption of pork and refraining from following the religious rituals of the non-Muslims.

While it is a fruitful exercise to document the information on the survivals of the past, it is perhaps more rewarding to know the factors that impeded complete and meaningful conversion.

The single most important cause of the nominal acceptance of Islam lies in the very nature of the factors that promoted mass conversion. If we take a closer look at the circumstances behind conversions, it becomes clear that the underlying factor of mass conversion was mundane rather than doctrinal or spiritual interest. The masses did not accept Islam because their intellectual and spiritual curiosity found an answer in it. In fact a common man's mind was too innocent to entertain any such curiosity or quest. Nor did they accept it with the hope that it would discipline their lives and help them to lead a virtuous life. To be sure, the masses entered into the fold of Islam because their leaders embraced the new faith or because they regarded the Muslim saint spiritually more powerful to cure their mundane problems; or they felt that Islam would elevate their social and economic position without demanding much from them; or because the new religion enjoyed the position of *reference group* culture. There is

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[15] In the contemporary sources of the Sultanate period there are some references, pointing to the fact that some people conducted business on the basis of *muzāribah*, according to which the money-lender and the borrower were the equal partners of the profit and loss of the business which was conducted by the borrower by acting as the manager of the proprietor of the money (*Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 376b, 387a). That there is no such concept of co-partnership in the present day Kashmir and that the post-Sultanate sources are also silent about it, we may safely conclude that *muzāribah* did not find a favourable response in Kashmir.

[16] See *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op.cit., pp. 194 sqq.

[17] Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p. 101.

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probably no need to labour the argument that mass conversion of any kind, especially in a credulous society, could be won by means other than by having a discussion on philosophical, religious or fundamental issues of life. Such society requires either winning over its leaders (at different levels) for winning the masses or spreading some piquant propaganda or rumour to create mass euphoria, or providing some cosmetic material benefits. Hence conversions at mass level are always flabby and, therefore, nominal. There is no denying the fact that the pious personalities and down to earth teachings of the Sūfī exemplars attracted the people to Islam. But what allured a common man to Islam, he failed to follow it practically. It is a truism of human psyche that good is endeared even by the worst, but not necessarily changing their attitudes. This is exactly true of the mass converts won by the pious character and teachings of the Sūfīs.

As stated in the previous Chapter, the conversion to Islam in Kashmir was fundamentally a group conversion. When the tribal leader or the religious head or, at a lower level, the head of the family accepted Islam for whatsoever reasons, he was followed by his whole tribe/ band of followers/ family, as the case would be, without demur. Similarly, the conversion of a ruler or a noble was followed by mass conversions. The fact is that the social organization of the time did not require the Muslim preachers to convince every single individual. They just needed to win only a few people for winning the whole society. Hence to the general public, the conversion meant hardly anything save the deletion – addition of some ritual or rituals. Continuity of the old life-pattern would have been still more marked among those groups, where the leader embraced Islam for purely material gains.

The changelessness of the mentality and minimal compliance with the spirit of Islam was no less the result of the society's assessment of a religion in terms of its saints' supernatural powers. The predilection and fetish for miracles gave primacy to the demonstration and exaggerated advertisement of feats over preaching, teaching and suasion for reorienting the souls of the converts. Mass visits to saints was a commonplace phenomenon of the time but, barring a few, the people did not visit them for guidance on the right path, instead they hankered for miraculous solution of their mundane problems.[18] In effect, the society put the saints on the hook; and consistent with the attitudes of the people they were left with no other alternative but to take recourse to the policy of 'what works best'. This is why most of

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[18] Ibid.

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the hagiographers have left out the details of the saintliness of their saints and only focused on and even greatly exaggerated their supernatural powers. The reason is simple. After all, only the miraculous woven personality of the saint satisfied the medieval mind about the saintliness of the saint.

Connected to this is the fact that the greatest preoccupation of the preachers was to win as many converts as possible within the shortest possible time, refraining from putting forth any hard pre-conditions. The demands were minimal. The observance of a few rituals was considered sufficient to distinguish the convert from his pre-conversion days and from those who opted not to change. In the beginning this small change was not even demanded and pressed for. Probably a simple profession of faith was considered sufficient for individuals to be Muslims. That is why we find many Muslims without circumcision and not observing fasts and offering prayers even as late as the second half of the sixteenth century.[19] And it is also no wonder to find many of them not changing their pre-conversion names.[20]

It was only after Islam gained a foothold in the society that the process of Islamization got a momentum with the spread of a network of *khānaqāhs*, *madrasas* and mosques together with the efforts of the preachers who settled in different places of the Valley. However, the 're-conversion movement' does not seem to have been launched with the same spirited zeal as was demonstrated for winning recruits to Islam. The most influential agencies of Islamization viz., *khānaqāh*, *madrasa*, and *Jami' Masjid* were mainly concentrated in the capital city. It is in the sixteenth century that we find attempts being made by Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, Mirzā Haidar Dughlat, Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm and later on by Bābā Nasīb al-Dīn Ghāzī to arrange *imāms* for different villages to teach people the basic tenets of Islam and to persuade them to offer prayers and observe fasts.[21] Yet, for want of effective *'ulamā'* and effective institutional organisation, Islam remained only skin deep in villages. That the dominant majority of the village folk continued to remain ignorant of the fundamentals of Islam,[22] to say least of practising them, alludes to the fact that only a few converts received instruction in their new faith. The same is true of the masses of the capital city as well. However, their ignorance

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19 *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 220-222; *Nūr-nāma*, ff. 415a-417a-b.

20 Supra, pp. 28, 216 and note 526.

21 Supra, pp. 70-72.

22 This fact still holds good.

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emanated from the economic and attitudinal factors rather than the non-availability of means to acquire knowledge.

Also, it seems that the great Sūfī saints who had settled in different nooks of the Valley for preaching and teaching failed to have equally zealous, knowledgeable and pious successors to carry forward the mission of their preceptors. And gradually, the missionary movement of the pious Sūfīs turned into posthumous saints' cults whose tenor generally ran counter to the teaching and example of the venerated deceased masters. The *sajjāda nishīns* (successors of spiritual authority), nearest disciples, *mutwalīs* (administrators of the *khānaqāhs* and its endowments) and *khuddām* (servants of the shrines), whose role was crucial to carry through the mission bequeathed to them by their *pīr*, developed a strong vested interest in the mass pilgrimages to the tombs and *khānaqāhs* of the venerated deceased saints. After all, a pilgrimage was incomplete without offering *nazr wo niyāz* at the shrine.[23] Ultimately the *sajjāda nishīns*, *mutwalīs*, *khuddām* and the nearest disciples ended up with a band of custodians and managers of shrines to appropriate the income derived from the endowments and *nazr wo niyāz*. Since the devotees visited the shrines for miraculous solutions of their worldly problems and as the material interests of *pīrzādās*, *bābās* and *rishis* (generic terms used for the custodians of the shrines) were wedded to mass pilgrimages to their respective shrines, these custodians of the shrines threw the teachings of their *pīr* overboard and just busied themselves in projecting the posthumous miraculous powers of the saints and the earthly benefits one would obtain by undertaking pilgrimages to their shrines, though, in the main, these projections militated against the doctrines and deeds of the saints.[24]

It may not be beside the point to mention here that with the successive conquest of Kashmir by the Mughals, Afghans and Sikhs the process of Islamization received a serious setback owing to the policy of rack-renting and drain of wealth of the new rulers.[25] Besides, when a kingdom was annexed "the patronage to arts and letters offered

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[23] *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*, f. 272b

[24] For first hand information in this regard, see Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, pp.414-416; Lawrence op.cit., pp. 286-89.

[25] For rack-renting and drain of wealth during the Mughal, Afghan and Sikh occupation of Kashmir, see Father Jerome Xavier, JRASB, Vol. XXIII. 1925. No. I, P. 116; William Moorcraft, *Travels*, II, pp. 123-125, 127, 235; G. T. Vigne, *Travels*, II, pp.118-19.

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by the local dynasty was largely withdrawn."[26] In the new circumstances the people were reduced to such a pauperized condition that according to a 19th century European traveller they "are nothing better than so many beggars."[27] Thus while for a common man all about life was to grapple with hunger, the religious teachers lost incentives to preach Islam and to impart Islamic education. Worse, the cruel regimes pampered the opportunist *'ulamā'* who became the ideologues of oppression and exploitation. And those who could not afford it, they either fled from the Valley or opted for escapism.[28] From 1819 A.D. onwards the process of Islamization received a further setback when the new rulers, consistent with the medieval polity, mainly patronised their own religion.[29]

Common men's ignorance of Arabic and Persian languages and consequently their ignorance of religious scriptures and religious literature not only accounted for a very superficial impact of Islam upon them, but it made them depend upon others for religious knowledge and guidance without being able to check its authenticity. Since there was no dearth of fabricators who manufactured stories for vested interests,[30] the common man generally stood ill informed. This is also the reason that the masses termed the didactic poetry of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn as *Kāshur Qur'ān* (Qur'ān in Kashmiri), for they could only understand and remember this message, composed as it was in their own language.

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[26] See Tapan Raychaudhuri, "The State and the Economy" in Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I, P. 184, for the perspective remarks about the devastating effects of the establishment of big empires (by forcibly conquering the small kingdoms) upon the indigenous population of the conquered kingdoms.

[27] Hugal, who visited the Valley during its Sikh occupation, says "In fact the country is so completely subjugated that the natives except a few traders in shawls, are nothing better than so many beggars" Hugal, *Travels*, op. cit., p. 116.

[28] For the forcible flight of the Kashmiris to different parts of India to escape from State oppression, see Moorcraft, *Travels*, 11, p. 67; Robert Thorp, *Kashmir Misgovernment*, p. 52; *Naqsh-i Iqbāl*, p. 146. According to a modern historian there were about one lac Kashmiri Muslims living in different parts of Punjab towards the beginning of the 20th century. These were the descendants of those Kashmiri Muslims who had streamed into Punjab in search of relieved conditions (Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom*, p. 449.)

[29] For details, see Pritipal Singh, *Revenue Structure and Expenditure Pattern During the Sikh Rule in Kashmir*, M. Phil. dissertation (unpublished), History Department, Kashmir University; Ali Muhammad Wani, *Agrarian Structure of Kashmir (1846-1947)*, Ph.D. thesis (unpublished), Kashmir University; Muhammad Yusuf Ganaie, *Emergence and Role of Muslim Conference in Kashmir*, M. Phil. dissertation (unpublished), History Department, Kashmir University.

[30] *Chilchilat al-'Ārifīn*, f. 49b.

The degree of dominance of any religion is to a large extent determined by the effectiveness of its institutional organization. And certainly in Kashmir the Islamic institutions have been traditionally weak. It hardly needs to be emphasised that the *'ulamā'* constitute the basis of the efficacy of Islamic institutions. By acting as *imāms, khatībs, qāzīs, muftīs, muhaddis, mudārris* and as members of the *Shūra*, the *'ulamā'* are supposed to order the Muslim society on Islamic lines. It is because of this paramount role of the *'ulamā'* that the Prophet is said to have remarked, *'ulamā'* are my heirs".[31] In Kashmir, however, the *'ulamā'* could not play their role effectively. The reasons were many. First, there was an extreme dearth of *'ulamā'*, both in terms of quantity and quality. As mentioned above, it was towards the late sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century that *imāms* were settled in different villages. But these *imāms* possessed only rudimentary knowledge of Islam to enable them to lead the prayers, to write *ta'wīz* (amulets) and to perform a few rituals.[32] They were dwarfish in knowledge and hence not able to exercise any meaningful impact upon the people. Second, the *'ulamā'* (exceptions apart) could not prove equal to their venerated position. It appears that unlike the Sūfīs and Rishis the actual life of the *'ulamā'* (who were active members of the society with all worldly temptations) was not commensurate with what they preached.[33] They, like others, fell prey to worldly greeds, which tarnished their position, and resultantly their preaching lost much of its impact.[34]

Also, the institutions which were basic for the *'ulamā'* to Islamize the society were either weak or were totally absent. In most of the villages mosques were built at a late stage. However, for want of any super-ordinate organization we find these mosques just poorly constructed mud ~~huts built~~ by the fleeced villagers.[35] Since the *imāms* were to be supported by the poor village folk, only an *'alim* of ordinary learning could be willing to act as *imām*.[36] Thus except leading prayers and writing amulets, the village *imām* has played no significant role. Besides, he had no role in deciding the disputes of the people or guiding them in different spheres of life. Islam could not do away with the conventional system of *panchkula* according to which the influential elders of the village acted as jury.[37] Thus all the matters were generally conducted and settled according to custom and tradition.[38] And with Islam having little role to play, its impact was also not more than superficial.

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[31] Cf. K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, p.150. That this *Hadith* was also quoted by the *'ulamā'* of Kashmir, see *Chilchilat al-'Ārifīn*, f. 49b.

[32] The situation remained the same till very recent times (Lawrence, p. 290). Even today in most villages the *imāms* are men of ordinary learning.

[33] *Kulliyāt*, pp. 40, 118, 120; *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, II. pp. 377 sqq; *Nūr-nāma*, f. 184b; Jonarāja, p. 96; *Tadhkirat al- 'Ārifīn*, ff. 394b-395a; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 53b, 54a, 61b, 62b.

[34] Ibid.

[35] To quote Lawrence, "The ordinary village mosque is no better than the meanest cultivator's cottage and I have often seen a mosque without a thatch and a beautiful old shrine tumbling to pieces for want of some simple repairs. There is a want of system in the Musalman religious administration". Lawrence, p. 285.

Undoubtedly, in the capital city one finds learned *'ulamā'* and the institutions like *shaikh al Islām*, *qāzī*, and *qāzi al qazāt*,[39] but since the state was the supreme authority, the *'ulamā'* acted as tools in the hands of the rulers, which ultimately made the personal wishes of the rulers supreme over the *Shari'ah*.[40] It is also significant to note that it was not the *qāzī*, but the Sultān who was the supreme judicial authority. The Sultāns dispensed justice while sitting in *dīwān khāna* in the open *darbār* every day; and the punishments inflicted were not always according to the *Shari'ah* but according to the discretionary power of the Sultān.[41] Among the common people, too, the practice of approaching the *qāzī* for the settlement of disputes could not gain ground. At the most the *qāzī's* role centred round deciding the theological issues. Though sometimes matrimonial and property disputes were referred to him, it was, however, an exception rather than a rule. It has been customary in Kashmir that for enforcing justice the official or religious authority is invoked only when the elders of a locality fail to settle a dispute.[42]

Other influential agencies of Islamization, *khānaqāh* and *madrasa* were located in the capital city alone. In villages there were only *maktabas* run by semi-literate *imāms* who imparted parrot-like teaching of the Qur'ān to the pupils to enable them to offer prayers. Interestingly, the common man's traditional habit of eschewing religious education was so deep-rooted that even after his conversion, this attitude remained unchanged. Thus as in the Hindu society, religious education became the exclusive concern of the hereditary *'ulamā'* families.[43]

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[36] Ibid., pp.285-86, 290, 291.

[37] For *Panchkula* see supra, p.227. That the *imām* was a man of no power, see Lawrence, p.291.

[38] For the fact that custom and tradition enjoyed an overriding importance in governing the life of Kashmiri Muslims, see Sant Ram Dogra, *Code of Tribal Customs in Kashmir*.

[39] For details, see *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, op. cit., pp. 220-21.

[40] cf. Jonarāja, p. 95; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 54b, 61b-62b.

[41] For example, Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn did not favour capital punishment of thieves. Instead, he made them work on public buildings. Jonarāja, p. 95.

[42] The practice continues down to our own times.

With the introduction of Shi'ism, the *'ulamā* got divided into two camps, each desperate to earn mass basis. While it is true that the *'ulamā'* of each sect worked hard for imparting religious education, it is equally true that they showed more zeal in strengthening the roots of their respective sects;[44] and in this pursuit much damage was caused to Islam. In order to reinforce numerical strength to their respective camps, the *'ulamā'* not only observed silence over the un-Islamic practices of their followers but also avowedly justified them.[45]

Of the several other factors that encouraged the selective acceptance of Islam in Kashmir was the nominal compliance of the state with the requirements for an Islamic state. Given the centrality of the ruler as the most dominant characteristic of the Sultanate, it was the personal ideology and the attitudes of each ruler that determined the nature of the state at different points of time. Yet, with regard to the ideology of the authority all the Sultāns shared one important attribute: their ideology was heavily influenced by the Persian theory of kingship and the pre-Muslim polity.[46] And no wonder, therefore, that the polity of the Sultanate was greatly different from the image of a *Shari'ah*-governed community.

At the same time, barring two or three rulers, the Sultāns showed little interest towards Islamizing the Muslim society. Sultān Sikandar and his Prime Minister, Suhabhatta (Saif al-Dīn) were the first to use state power for Islamizing the society.[47] But this whole exercise was undone by Sultān Zain al-'Ābidīn's long reign of fifty years, which witnessed revival of the old culture under the fostering care and patronage of the Sultān.[48] His successors, Sultān Haidar Shāh and Sultān Hasan Shāh,

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[43] This trend has changed very recently mainly because of the efforts of the religious reformers of the last century.

[44] This is clear from the sources – political as well as hagiological – relevant for sixteenth century Kashmir.

[45] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 54a, 61a-62b

[46] See *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 194 sqq.

[47] Supra, pp. 62-64, 114-15, 123-24.

[48] Jonarāja, pp. 76 sqq; Śrivara, pp.138 sqq; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff. 27ab. Also, N. K. Zutshi. *Sultant Zain ul-Abidin of Kashmir*.

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spent most of their time in merry-making.[49] After Hasan Shāh the Valley was thrown into a welter of chaos and confusion owing to the tussle between different rival factions of the nobility to grab the coveted post of *wizārat* and to appropriate big *jāgīrs*.[50] Mirzā Haidar Dughlat evinced some ~~interest in Islamizing the people~~ by appointing *imāms*, *qāzis* and *muhatasibs*, but his work was ~~marred~~ by his policy of favouritism towards his own people and by his politically motivated 'anti Shi'i' policy.[51] Among the Chaks we come across two types of rulers: those who showed interest in religious matters and those who exhibited no such interest at all.[52] However, those who did show interest were Shi'i zealots, more interested to use political power to impose their own sect.[53] This divided the Muslim community into two hostile camps.[54]

On the whole, the Sultāns opted for a syncretic way of life. They observed religious rituals, patronized religious class and religious institutions but when it ~~came~~ to the question of obeying the teachings and spirit of their religion, they turned their backs. Both in their private and public life they adapted Islam to the local circumstances and showed more interest in rulership than Islam.[55] Since the Islamization process largely depended upon the patronage of the rulers and since the culture of the ruling section formed the reference model for the general populace, it is no wonder to see the people lax in religious matters and enjoying freely the discretionary power to adopt a mixed culture in imitation to their rulers. The argument may receive further weight if it is borne in mind that the Muslim Sultanate was articulated around the ruler, and the spiritual importance of *rājāship* had deep traditions in Kashmir.[56]

The feeble hold of religion upon the Kashmiri Muslims cannot be fully grasped without bearing in mind the religious milieu of the medieval Muslim world, especially that of Persia and Central Asia wherefrom Islam entered the Valley and with which Kashmir had intimate religious, cultural, economic and political contacts. By the time Islam penetrated into Kashmir, the Muslims of Persia and Central Asia had made vital compromises with the local cultures and the authority of *Shari'ah* was greatly encroached upon by royal prerogative.[57] Since Persia and Central Asia acted as the main source of inspiration and guidance for Kashmiri Muslims, the Islam of Kashmir could not be understandably different from its fountain head.

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[49] Śrivara, pp. 188, 197, 199, 232-45; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.28a; Haidar Malik, p. 47.

[50] For details of this tussle, see *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 106 sqq.

[51] Sayyid 'Ali, f.26a; ~~*Bahāristān-i*~~ *Shāhī*, ff. 52b-54ab; Haidar Malik, p. 57.

[52] Of the Chak rulers who showed religious zeal mention may be made of Daulat Chak, Ghāzī Shāh Chak and Ya'qūb Shāh Chak. On the other hand, Husain Shāh Chak, 'Ali Shāh Chak and Yūsuf Shāh Chak demonstrated no remarkable interest in religious matters.

[53] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, ff.58ab, 90ab; Haidar Malik, pp. 81-83.

[54] Ibid.

[55] For details, see Jonarāja, Śrivara, *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb* and *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, op.cit., also ~~see~~ *Kashmir Under the Sultans*.

[56] V. N. Drabu, *Kashmir Polity*, pp. 54-56.

This brings us to another significant problem – the force of habit, which frustrated the objectives of even the greatest ideological revolutions human history has witnessed so far. Needless to mention, the Muslim society of Kashmir mainly consisted of converts from Hinduism. However, though the formal conversion from Hinduism to Islam took years, if not moments, the actual conversion form Hindu to Islamic way of life remained far from achieved as it was a question of changing attitudes, habits and mentality of the people, which change slower than anything.[58] Even Kalhana notices this characteristic feature of human mind. To quote him: "Habits fixed by long practice are not likely to cease even when their reason is gone."[59] Formal conversion to Islam and practical adherence to the old culture thus went hand in hand. The deeply embedded habit of many age- old practices and the resultant reluctance of the converts to completely part their ways with them impelled even the *Shari'ah*-minded preachers to bring Islam in tune with the traditional religious practices of the converts.[60] Sometimes the converts, while not affording to ignore their past, adopted many of their age-old practices either by changing their names or investing Islamic meanings into them.[61]

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[57] Cf. *Dhakhirat al- Mulūk*, I pp. 97, 131,185-106 for Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's repeated mention of perverted behaviour of a section of *'ulamā'* and Sūfīs. And for the fact that the authority of *Sharī'ah* was encroached upon by royal prerogative, see C.L. Klausner, *The Seljuk Vizirate: A Study of Civil Administration 1055-1194*, p. 44, Afsar Umar Salim Khan and Mohammad Habib. *The Political Theory of the Delhi Sultanate*, VI-X.

[58] To quote Ernest Labrousse: "the social changes more slower than the economic, and the mental more slowly than the social". E. Labrousse, Preface to G. Dupeux. *Aspects de l'historie Sociale et politique du loir-et-Char*, 1848-1914, Paris, 1962, p.xi. Vide, Jacques Le Goff, "Mentalities: a history of ambiguities," in Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora (eds.), *Constructing the Past*, p. 167.

[59] *Rājataranginī*, I. Book. IV, 428.

[60] See Chapter IV.

[61] Ibid.

Local Hindu-Buddhist beliefs and customs eventually influenced the immigrant Muslims too. This was natural because in the initial days of the Sultanate they formed a tiny minority surrounded by the vast Hindu majority and subsequently by an overwhelming population of the neo-converts. For about half a century after the foundation of the Sultanate the society of Kashmir was predominantly a Hindu society with only a very thin slice of immigrant Muslims and converts.[62] Besides being a dominant majority, the Hindus enjoyed all high and low positions in the state; only the ruler was Muslim.[63] True, for not less than half a century the Hindus formed the *reference group* and consequently Hindu culture enjoyed the position of the *reference group culture*. The Hindu culture was followed by the Muslims as a standard to evaluate their attitudes, customs, rituals, etc., as the best way of staking a claim to a higher position in the society. Little wonder, therefore, that we find even the Sultāns behaving like Hindus and that, too, in religious matters.[64]

With the mass conversion to Islam, which started from the later quarter of the fourteenth century, the immigrant Muslims again found themselves in a cultural minority, surrounded as they were by an overwhelming population of neo-converts. The culture of the neo-converts assumed the position of the regional culture as the converts were not only won from the masses, but the whole landed aristocracy, traders and other influential groups accepted Islam en-mass. This is besides the fact that local culture had already made greater influence upon the ruling family. As a matter of fact, even after the mass conversions to Islam, it was neither the puritan Islamic way of life, nor even the Persian or Central Asian Islam, but a synthetic culture – a mixture of Islamic, Persian, Central Asian and indigenous cultures which assumed the position of a standard culture.

This was not, however, all. The local influence was felt by the immigrant Muslims through another but more effective channel viz., the matrimonial relations they entered into with the Hindus and Buddhists or the newly converted Muslims. It is worth mentioning that of the Muslims who immigrated into the Valley and settled there in large numbers, only a very few had brought their families with them. The majority of the immigrant Muslims including the Sultāns married either the converted Muslim girls or the daughters of the converted Muslims.[65] Marrying the

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[62] Supra, p. 57.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 197, 214.

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Kashmiri girls meant the sneaking in and the ultimate predominance of the Hindu and Buddhist ethos even in the families of those immigrant Muslims who had a very old and rich Muslim pedigree. Women folk's pristine simplicity of their pre-conversion life style and its profound influence upon their husbands is highlighted by the contemporary sources.[66]

Last but not least, the question of the nominal conversion to Islam also raises the question of the nature of the contemporary belief in the Hereafter. There is no denying the fact that the conception of death and the fate of the souls of the dead predominated both in pre-and-post-conversion Kashmir, yet this belief was labial rather than a matter of faith, for the people could otherwise hardly afford to be religiously lax. The faith was eroded by the people's mundane preferences of life. The fact that the worldly desires had made the people predominantly this-worldly is amply evidenced by the Sūfis' vehement denunciation of the worldly pleasures and also by their persuasive argument that the real *jahād* is *jahād* against one's *nafs*.[67] The refrain of all the works of Sayyid ʻAli Hamdānī is on persuading his readers to treat the worldly desires and luxuries with all contempt. He says, "Since the love of God and the love of world cannot co-exist, so one should be grieved at having worldly possessions and pleased with their loss."[68] The Rishis were so much convinced about the fact that the worldly possessions create arrogant tendencies, forcing one to give preference to the mundane world over the Hereafter that they spurned all worldly ties – home, family, wealth, sex, etc. The didactic poetry of the founder of the Order also revolves round controlling of *nafs*.

Since the people gave preference to *nafs* it corroded their faith. To quote Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī:

نفس را تسبیح مصحف در یمین
خنجر و شمشیر اندر آستین

> The carnal self has the rosary and the Qur'ān in the right hand,
> [And] a dagger and a sword up the sleeve.[69]

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[66] Ibid.

[67] *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, II, pp. 18-21.

[68] *Risāla-i Ma'rifat-i Zuhd*, f. 10a.

[69] *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, II, p. 49.

6: Sūfism, Local Traditions and Islam in Kashmir

I

Some European observers of nineteenth century Kashmir were astounded to notice what they call indelible marks of Hinduism upon Kashmiri Muslim religious behaviour even after the lapse of many centuries of their conversion and many political vicissitudes and cultural changes Kashmir had passed through since. Baron Charles Hugel writes with amazement:

> Subjected in succession by Mohammedans from Central Asia, who subverted their ancient and patriarchal institutions and government; by the emperors of Delhi, who brought among them, in their search after new pleasures, a voluptuous and luxurious court abandoned to pomp and prodigality; by the fierce Afghans; and finally, by the half-civilized Sikhs who now dwell in those long-deserted imperial halls, what can remain of originality to these inhabitants of the Valley, after as many changes of the rulers, each in turn eager to destroy the works of his predecessors? *It is, however, important to notice, that Hinduism, once obeyed, is hardly ever to be eradicated from the minds of its followers, even though they may be compelled to exchange their faith for another, nay, even though their conversion may seem purely voluntary and unconnected with political events*[1] [emphasis added].

Exactly the same impression was echoed by another keen observant of Kashmiri society, Walter Lawrence.[2]

II

However, what these Europeans failed to take account of is that along with the deep-rooted local habits and customs, which the imperious human mentality refuses to compromise so easily, Sūfism played a no less complementary role in shaping what may be called a syncretized religious behaviour of Kashmiri Muslims. It hardly needs to be repeated that the Muslim preachers who contributed to the process of Islamization of Kashmiri society were, without exception, adherents of one or the other Sūfī *tarīqa*, and barring a few all of them belonged to either Persia or Central Asia. Even those 'few', who were locals, were also the *murīds* (disciples) of Persian and Central Asian Sūfī *pīrs*. While the details of the *tarīqa* Sūfism have been given below, here, suffice it to say that in many respects it bordered close to the salient features of local mysticism. The reasons are not difficult to seek. After all, in its long and dynamic career in Persia and Central Asia, Sūfism was greatly influenced by the accretions drawn from the local environment. And interestingly enough, the ancestral belief system of Kashmir had also accrued from the same sources to which Persian and Central Asian beliefs and practices owed their origin and development. Thus, what was accomplished in Persian and Central Asian environment long back seems to a superficial observer something to have been innovated in Kashmir.

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[1] Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels*, op.cit., Preface, XVI.

[2] Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 286.

More importantly, by the time the Sūfī saints entered the Valley, Sūfism had got an ideological basis for organising mystic life in local contexts. While referring to this notable development of great vitality, Bruce Lawrence writes approvingly:

> What Sūfī leaders posited, on the broadest scale, was a recasting of mystic imagery and ascetical speculation in forms that could be promulgated among a wider range of people than merely the elites of Dar al Islam. Even the impress of Imām Ghazzali is debatable. The primary literary instrument for popularizing Sūfī practices was not, as one might have expected, the Persian summaries of Ghazzali's major tome, *Ihyā-'ulūm-ad-din*, but rather the 'Arabic handbooks, with Persian commentaries, of two Baghdadi savants, *Ādāb al-murīdīn* by Abū Najīb Suhrawardī (d. 1168) and *'Awārif al-ma'arif* by his nephew Abū Hafs Umar Suhrawardī (d.1234). They were not self-sufficient mystic manuals; they were intended to build on familiarity with the Qur'ān as well as knowledge of *hadīth*. Yet what they uniquely provided was an ideological basis for the organisation of mystic life in local contexts. And they complemented the growing predilection for poetry and music that characterized most of the early Sūfī adepts in all parts of Asia. Institutional Sufism grew because its dynamism was intellectual as well as programmatic; its originality lay in.... its openness to the new forms... that emerged from the regions to which it was introduced.[3]

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[3] Bruce B. Lawrence, "Islam in India: The Function of Institutional Sūfism in the Islamization of Rajasthan, Gujrat and Kashmir," in K. Ishwaran and Bardwell L.

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It is significant to mention here that the first known Sūfī saint to have set foot in the Valley and played a significant role in the Islamization of Kashmir, was a Suhrawardī and the one who was closely related to the founders of the *silsila*.[4] Hence *Ādāb al- Murīdīn* and *'Awārif al- Ma'ārif*, which provided 'an ideological basis for the organization of mystic life in local contexts,' became the primary literary instrument for popularizing Sūfī practices in Kashmir. It may also be worth mentioning that in Kashmir the work of integrating the local beliefs and practices into the broader framework of Islam was accomplished by the great Suhrawardī Sūfī scholar of sixteenth century Kashmir, Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, who, while taking cue from the great Sūfī masters of regional fraternities, used his intellectual, theological and mystical insights to key the deep-rooted local beliefs and practices to Islam. Not surprisingly, we find him justifying the scope for innovations in Islam:

در شریعت مومناں ہر بدعے مذموم نیست
چوں بہ بینی بدعے ممدوح یا حسن مثال

> In *Shari'ah* every innovation (*bida'*) is not objectionable; [thus] when you observe any good and acceptable innovation, don't raise a hue and cry against it.[5]

III

The main argument that has been put forth to show that the Kashmiri Muslims have retained the elements of Hinduism is what the Europeans, sociologists and Muslims purists call 'saint and tomb worship' practised by the Muslims of the Valley. To quote Walter Lawrence:

> In their hearts they are Hindus, and the religion of Islam is too abstract to satisfy their superstitious cravings, and they turn from the mean priest and the mean mosque to the pretty shrines of carved wood and roof bright with the iris flowers where the saints of past time lie buried. They like to gaze on the saint's old clothes and turban, and to examine the cave in which he spent his ascetic life...Every Kashmiri believes that the saints will aid if men will call, and they think that a dead saint is more efficacious than a living

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Smith, *Contributions to Asian Studies*, Vol. 17, *Islam in Local Contexts*, (Ed. Richard C. Martin), p. 28.

[4] See supra, p53 fn 51.

[5] Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Qasida-i Lāmiyya* (printed text under the title, *Hardi Rishi)*, p. 74.

> priest. The Kashmiris are called by foreigners *Pīr Parast*, that is saint- worshippers, and the epithet is well deserved.[6]

However, the assertion that the Kashmiri Muslims' 'saint and tomb worship' is the result of the retention of the Hindu beliefs by them is only a half-truth. To be sure, as we will see below, this practice sustained and became popular only because it was preached and encouraged by Sūfism and more so by the Institutional Sūfism. And as the practice suited well to the pantheistic religious mentality of the converts and as it provided a channel for maintaining and practising their deeply embedded religious rituals, it is not difficult to understand why 'saint and tomb worship' became a widespread practice among them rather than observing the cardinal principles of Islam in letter and spirit.

The Institutional Sūfism, which evolved gradually in the twelfth century in Persian and Central Asian environment, was characterized by hierarchical orders (*tarīqas; silsilas*), charismatic leaders (*pīrs, murshīds, shaikhs*), delineated territories of spiritual jurisdiction (*vilāyats*), residential buildings-cum-preaching-teaching and meditation centers (*khānaqāhs*) and tombs (*mazārs*) of the *pīrs*. While the founder of a *silsila*, the perfected saint, was the *pīr* of the *pīrs* (*pīr'i pīran*), *shaikh* of the *shaikhs* (*shaikh'i shaikhan*), *amīr* of the *amīrs* (*amir'i kabīr*), *'arif* of the *'arifs* (*sultān al- 'arifīn*), *qutb* of the *qutbs* (*qutub al-aqtāb*) or *ghawth* of the *ghawths* (*ghawth al-a'zam*), he appointed his front-ranking disciples as the leaders of the missions for propagating Islam and introducing the *silsila* to the new areas. In this way a hierarchical chain of *pīrs* came into existence, and the chain came down to the local and even to village levels.

The importance and popularity of a *silsila* depended upon the accepted signs of the peculiar proximity of the *Shaikh* to Allāh. The accepted signs of this relationship were: the *Shaikh's* ability to perform miracles (*karāmat*), descent from the Prophet or his companions, connections with a prestigious Sūfi *silsila*, mastery of Islamic doctrines and *Sūfi* texts, a tendency towards ecstasy and a reputation for eccentricity or asceticism. The combination of these qualifications or some of them gave rise to ideal *Shaikhs* who acted as spiritual teachers and guides to their disciples and who were expected to heal both mental and bodily diseases by spiritual means.[7] However, two qualifications

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[6] Walter Lawrence, op.cit., p.286.

[7] For details, see P. M. Currie, *The Shrine and Cult of Mu'in-al-din Chishti of Ajmer*, pp. 1-19.

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were indispensable for a *Wali*. These were control on *nafs* and power to work *karāmat* (miracles). Al-Hujwari (d.1072), the famous Sūfi master and the author of the widely read and quoted Sūfi text *Kashf al-Mahjūb* refers to these crucial qualities of *Shaikhs* that were considered clear signs of their being *Auliyā' Allāh* (The Friends of Allāh):

> God has saints (*auliyā'*) whom he has specially distinguished by His friendship and whom He has chosen to be the governors of His Kingdom and has marked out to manifest His actions and has peculiarly favoured with diverse kinds of miracles (*karāmat*) and has purged of natural corruption and has delivered from subjection to their lower soul and passion, so that all their thoughts are of Him and their intimacy is with Him alone.... God, then has caused the Prophetic evidence (*burhani nabowi*) to remain down to the present day and has made the saints the means whereby it is manifested in order that the signs of the Truth and the proof of Muhammad's veracity may continue to be clearly seen.... They have become entirely devoted to His business, and have ceased to follow their sensual affections.[8]

It was the unanimous view of the Sūfi masters that *pīr* is indispensable for following the *rāh'i sūlūk* (the Sūfi way) which leads one to *wisāli haq* (union with Allāh). They regarded such people as misguided who held that there was no need of *rahbar* (guide) to obtain *wisāl*.[9] Also, it was maintained that no *tarīqa* is valid unless it is pursued under the guidance of a *pīr*.[10] They even argued that one who may not have a *pīr* to guide him, then *Satan* becomes his guide.[11]

The *pīr-murīd* relationship – the keynote of Sūfism – was governed by an extreme code of subservience, which a *murīd* had necessarily to observe in relation with his *pīr*. The underlying feature of this code was that the *murīd* had to completely surrender himself before his *pīr*. He was to have such a profound *a'itiqād* (faith) in his *pīr* that he had to obey him at all costs even if it would apparently seem a flagrant violation of *Sharī'ah* and even that of *tarīqa*.[12] A Sūfi poet renders this basic condition of *pīr-murīd* relationship as follows:

هر چند که عیب پیش بیند   نقصان همه سوی خویش بیند
چون حال مرید این صفت شد   فرزند کوی معرفت شد

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[8] Al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (Eng. tr. R. A. Nicholson), pp. 212-13.

[9] Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol.I, pp.6-7.

[10] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, *Risāla-i Fatuwiyya*, f. 255a.

[11] The Sūfis attributed the Prophet to have said: "He who has no *pīr*, the devil is his *pīr*". Amīr Hasan Sijzi, *Fawāid al-Fuad*, p. 175; Hamīd Qalandar, *Khair al-Majālis*, ed. K. A. Nizami, p. 48; *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. II, pp. 352-353.

[12] *Shumā'il al-Ataqiyā*, Vide, *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol.I, p. 367.

> Notwithstanding that he [the disciple] observes vices [in his *pīr*],
> He, however, blames his own observing self.
> When the disciple attains to this condition,
> Then [alone] he is the excellent seeker after the Truth.[13]

The natural corollary of the ascetic, charismatic and institutional position of the *pīrs* was the gradual transfer of beliefs and practices associated with the Prophet to them. Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī lends legitimacy to the saints to be followed in the same way as one is to follow the Prophets:

> Allāh says, 'These Prophets are guided by Allāh, so you should also follow in their footsteps'. Since the *Mashāikh* (plural of *Shaikh*) have also been guided [by Allāh] so they, too, are eligible to be followed.[14]

Some Sūfi masters also quoted such traditions as "The *Shaikh* in his *quam* (community) is like Prophet in *ummah*"[15], or "The Shaikh in the midst of his *murīds* is as Prophet in the midst of his companions."[16]

The *Auliyā'* (plural of *walī*) were not only the unending proof of the Prophet's veracity but, more so, they were the manifestation of Allāh both in body and soul:

مظہر حق است جسم ظاہرش   سر یزدان است جان ظاہرش

> His [*pīr's*] body is the manifestation of the Truth.
> (And) his pious soul is [the manifestation of] Allāh's secret.[17]

Therefore, the love of *Shaikh* was regarded as the love of Allāh (*mahābbati Shaikh mahābbati Allāh*).[18] And no prayer, not even remembering Allāh was more rewarding than the company of a *Shaikh* (*saya'i rahbar bih ast az zikr'i haq*).[19]

The *pīrs* were not only the only means to provide a man with a way to Allāh, but as *Auliyā' Allāh* (The Friends of Allāh) they were the only reason why the Universe has been created and the only source through which Allāh bestows the people with His blessings. They were in Aristotelian terms, the final cause of all sub-lunar existence for the sake of whose perfection all the elements of nature and indeed even all other humans exist.[20] "Through their blessings rains fall from the heaven and through the purity of their lives the plants spring up from the earth."[21]

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[13] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. I, p. 321.

[14] *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, quoted by Khākī, Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 3-4.

[15] *Mirsād al-'Ibād*, quoted by Khākī, Vol. I, p. 5.

[16] *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, p. 19.

[17] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. I, p. 278.

[18] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 408.

[19] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 640.

The more the *pīr's* quasi-divine status was elevated and propagated, the more a given *silsila* had the chances to flourish. For this purpose the *murīds* wrote anecdotal studded biographies of the saints and even fabricated *Hadīth*.

Further, to epitomize the special importance of *pīrs* and to perpetuate their memory for perpetuation of the *silsilas*, tombs were constructed over their graves. After all, the *pīr* was not an ordinary Sultan or *Bādshāh*. But he was *Sultān al-'Ārifīn* (Sultan of the Gnostics) and *Bādshāh'i Vilāyat* (Emperor of the spiritual kingdom) and the one who did not die.[22] As the tombs were constructed over the graves of the worldly rulers to symbolize their extraordinary greatness–a practice whose origin can be traced back to nomadic Central Asia,[23] the *pīr* was considered more befitting for this honour than the rulers of the mundane and transitory world.

The impact of the popular piety characterised by all-pervasive shrine worship mentality of the pre-Islamic cultures was no less a factor that accounted for constructing tombs over the graves of the saints to meet the popular religious urges. Writing about the origin and development of Islamic shrines, Marshall G.S. Hodgson states:

> For a long time after the advent of Islam as dominant religious allegiance, the shrines of the populace, the holy places where ordinary people were able to find access to a special sacredness to grace the routine events and crises of their lives, mostly remained in the hands of the non- Muslim *dhimmi* communities. Shi'i piety was early able to develop a limited number of shrines in the form of the tombs of descendants of 'Ali; in some areas, as in Syria, Muslim converts could share unashamedly with those who remained

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[20] *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif*, quoted by Khākī, Vol. I, pp. 3-4.

[21] Ibid.

[22] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. II, pp. 16, 19-20.

[23] "The earliest barrows appeared in the Eurasian steppes as early as the third millennium B.C. All through the next four thousand years, down to the Middle Ages, barrows marked the tombs of the people of the Bronze Age, of the Cimmerians, Scythians...". For details, see A. M. Leskov, "Treasures from the Scythian Barrows," *The Journal of Central Asian Studies*, Centre of Central Asian Studies, The University of Kashmir, Vol. 7, 1996, No. I, pp. 43-60.

> Christians in the cult of such shrines as the reputed tombs of ancient Prophets, recognised in both traditions. But it was only with the spread and general acknowledgement of *tariqah* Sufism and its myriad saints that it became possible to produce (or to Islamize) Islamic shrines everywhere, and to every purpose – shrines where one could pray for the pressing needs of everyday: women for sons or men for good harvests; for rain or peace or love or healing.[24]

The tombs assumed quasi-divine significance as the tradition that "Allāh forbade the soil to consume the Prophet buried in it" was extended to include the bodies of saints too.[25] They also quoted a tradition that "the *Auliyā'* do not die, they [just] go from one home to another home."[26] Not surprisingly, then, their graves were called *khawāb gāh*[27](sleeping place) and the saint was thought to be as strongly present there as he used to be before his *zāhiri*(outward) death, to receive the intercessory pleas from his followers.[28]

What is rather more significant to note is that the Sūfis not only propagated in favour of visiting the tombs of the *pīrs* for fulfilling the spiritual and mundane needs,[29] but some of them even equated the visits to and circumambulation of the *pīrs* and their tombs with the pilgrimage to Makka and the circumambulation of Ka'aba. To support this contention they argued that the *qalab* (heart) of a Sūfi is the abode of Allāh as none/nothing except Him can enter into it. And "whereas Ka'aba is the home of Allāh, *qalab/dil* of a Sūfi is His actual residence." Therefore, according to them, it is a better kind of Ka'aba; and consequently it would be a better kind of *hajj* if one pays visits to and makes a circumambulation of a Sūfi or his tomb.[30]

Interestingly, it is not only the tomb but any material thing associated with the name of the *pīr* that symbolized the presence of the living *pīr*. Thus *khānaqāhs*, *madrasas*, mosques and symbolic tombs associated with a saint assumed sacredness and became places of pilgrimage. If the *murīds* succeeded in obtaining a relic of the *pīr*, the structure assumed further significance.

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[24] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 218.

[25] Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, Vol. II, p. 286.

[26] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. I, pp. 225-26, Vol. II, pp. 16, 19-20.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 225-231.

[30] See Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 226-27; Vol. II, pp. 82-90 for Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī having quoted various Sūfī works in this regard.

It is in this background that 'saint and tomb worship' of Kashmiri Muslims can become intelligible, especially when it is considered that the leading *pīrs* of Kashmir – Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn Bulbul Shāh, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm and Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī – who have remained the touchstone of Kashmiri Sūfis' and the common Kashmiri Muslims' belief system, were the true followers of the great Sūfi masters of Persia and Central Asia in holding the *Shaikhs* in high veneration. No less important in this context is the fact that most of them were greatly influenced by the *wahadat al- wajūd* philosophy of Ibn 'Arabī.[31]

According to Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, Sūfis are not only spiritually the most exalted and, therefore, most near to Allāh – the status which no commoner can achieve[32]; but they are the reason of cosmic purposiveness and they are the axis round which the whole universe revolves:

هرچه از گردون گردان میرسد   از طفیل جان مردان میرسد
گر باشد نفس ارباب شهود   خود نگردد دور پرکار وجود

Whatever descends from the ever-revolving Heaven,
Is only due to the grace of the men [of Allāh].
If the existence of these men of sight were not there,
The compasses of existence would cease to move around. [33]

The Sayyid does not recognise the legitimacy of any Sūfi *tarīqa* if it is not followed under the guidance of a *pīr*.[34] He traces the origin of *tarīqa* and *pīr/murīd* relationship to Prophet Muhammad, who, according to the Sayyid, guided 'Ali and "the chain of all living *pīrs* goes back to him[35]". "This", He says, "is the secret of the *tarīqa* and the *silsila*.[36]" Like other Sūfis he also maintains that a *murīd* should give up entirely his own will and be to his *pīr* like a corpse in the hands of a *ghassal* (bather).[37] Sayyid 'Ali also attached great spiritual importance to undertaking pilgrimage to the graves of the *pīrs*.[38]

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[31] For Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, see his *Risāla-i Wajudiyya*, *Risāla-i Qudusiyya* and *Risāla-i Istilahat-i Nūrbakhshiyya*. The Sayyid was so much impressed by *Fasus al-Hikam* of Ibn 'Arabī that he translated it into Persian and prescribed it for his *murīds*. See his *Risala-i-Hal al-Fasūs* which is his Persian translation of *Fasūs al-Hikam*.

[32] Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, *Risāla-i Fatutiyya*, ff. 68a, 70a.

[33] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, I. p. 300.

[34] *Risāla-i Fatutiyya*, f. 255a.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] *Risāla-i Dah Qa'ida*, f. 6a.

[38] See *Khulāsat al-Manāqib*, *passim*; *Manqabat al-Jawāhir*, *passim*.

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Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, the illustrious *khalīfa* of Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm, wrote the famous *Dastūr al-Sālikīn* with the primary objective to bring out the quasi-divine position of the Shaikhs, for which he drew profusely from Sūfi works. He persuasively ~~argues~~ that a *pīr* is indispensable for following the way of Allāh[39]; he is like Prophet in his group[40]; he is sinless[41]; he is the manifestation of Allāh's grace[42]; Allāh lives in him[43]; his organs are the organs of Allāh[44]; he is a reason for making this universe[45]; his company is superior to any kind of worship[46]; he is a mediator between man and Allāh[47]; Allāh showers His bounties through him[48]; his love means the love of Allāh[49]; he is invested with *karāmat*[50]; he does not die[51] and the *murīd* should completely surrender himself before his *pīr* even to the point of rejecting his own will[52].

But what is more intriguing is that he equates the pilgrimage to and *tawāf* of the saints and their graves with the pilgrimage to Makka and the *tawāf* of Ka'aba.[53]

Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, the founder of Shi'ism in Kashmir, had declared long before Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī: "Any Muslim who would circumambulate my *khānaqāh* seven times, it would mean that he has made a circumambulation of Ka'aba, and he would earn the same *sawāb* (reward) as he would earn by circumambulating Ka'aba"[54].

The reputed Kubrāvī saint-scholar of sixteenth century Kashmir, Shaikh Ya'qūb Sarfi (b.1521) also followed the other saints of his time and equated the *Khānaqāh* (*Khānaqāh-i-Mu'alla*) of the founder of Kubrāvī order in Kashmir (Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī) with Ka'aba.

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39 *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, Vol. I, pp. 61-10; Vol. II, pp. 352-53, 408-09, 446-47.

40 Ibid., Vol. I, p. 5; Vol. II, p. 53.

41 Ibid., I, p. 321.

42 Ibid., p.278.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

46 Ibid., p. 276, 640; Vol.II, 278, 457-58.

47 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 452.

48 Ibid., Vol. I, p.5

49 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 408

50 Ibid., *passim*.

51 Ibid., II, p.16, 19, 20.

52 Ibid., Vol.I, p. 358-359; Vol. II, p. 521.

53 Ibid., Vol.II, pp.82-90.

54 *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 87.

رسد حجره خاصش فیض هر کس را   بنای خانقاه او است، کعبه در کشمیر

> Everybody is blessed by [visiting] his special apartment (*hujrah*),
> His *khānaqāh* [in the Valley] is Ka'aba in Kashmir.[55]

The same is true of the followers of Rishis. The following verse, which used to be at the tip of the tongue of Kashmiri folk, alludes to the exaggerated importance ascribed by the disciples of Rishis to the visits of the tombs of the founder of the Rishi cult and his immediate *khulafa* (successors):

یُس گژھہ چرار، بمزو، مقام   تس پیٹھ دوزخ نار چھ حرام

> Whosoever would go to Chrār, Bumazoo and Muqām, he would escape from the fire of Hell.[56]

It is no wonder, then, that among the Kashmiri folk it has been a commonplace belief that a poor man's *hajj* (pilgrimage to Makka) would be performed by performing pilgrimages to the local shrines.

The 'saint and shrine worship' suited the local environment down to the ground. That there was a very strong tradition of saint worship in Kashmir, it is rewarding to go through the *Śaivāgamas* which shed light on the pre-eminent position held by the *gurus* (spiritual teachers) and the divine status assumed by them. In his recent study on *Śaivāgamas*, V.N. Drabu writes:

> The *guru* occupies a key position in the initiatory structure of tantrism. Strictly speaking a *guru* is a man or woman who gives *dikśa* (initiation) into *śaivayoga*: the guidance of a master being necessary in all traditional disciplines or crafts... In a hierarchical interdependence and ritualistic interpersonal relations we are introduced to him as the only recognised guide to his disciple....The *sadhika* (disciple) completely submits himself to his master's will; in this sense submission is axiomatic to the relationship[57]...."Those mean persons who are not devoted to the *guru*... are perplexed in *amokśa* by *maya*. Such persons never grow, deprived as they are of *Śiva-dikśa*[58]"... In the tantric rituals complete surrender to the *guru*

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[55] Muhammad Tayib Siddiqi, *Rashhāt'i Kalam'i Sarafi*, p.221.

[56] Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, Bābā Zain al-Dīn and Bābā Bām al-Dīn are buried at Chrār, Muquām and Bumazoo respectively. Like other children of my age and environment, this verse was dinned into my ears during my childhood; and I remember it since then.

[57] V. N. Drabu, *Śaivāgamas*, p.126.

[58] Ibid., p.136.

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> develops as the basic idea of 'spiritual enlightenment,' technically called the *pauruṣa jñāna* or the ~~manifestation of the Self.[59] He says,~~ "I alone am the supreme reality; this whole universe is in me; I am the stay and support of this all."[60] He claims unquestioning authority and the sole right of protection. For obtaining the highest *siddhi* (*param-siddhi*) *guru* is the only means (*upāya*)[61] Guru is Śiva; he bestows Śivatva. There is none else to give *bhoga* through *karmas*. Siva alone is *guru*; he is the embodiment of kindness. How can there be anyone else to tear the *paśupaśās* (bonds of creaturehood) asunder.[62] At his mere touch people get purged of all their sins accumulated in several births. Just a mere glimpse of him, a discourse with him, a mere touch or mere remembrance of him incorporates *Śivatattva* in the disciple who never goes down from that highest state[63]

Besides a long history of saint worship, the people also had the crusted habit of worshipping sacred shrines called *asthapans* or *tīrthas*. With pantheism graven on their minds, the people were always on the alert to seize upon any manifestation of the powers of nature to endow it with supernatural powers. The result was that Kashmir became a land where according to Kalhana "there is not a space as large as a grain of sesamum without a *tīrtha*[64]" to which the people turned for solution of the crises of their lives. A no less striking feature of the Kashmiri Hindus' shrine worship disposition was that they substituted the important Hindu *tīrthas*, located elsewhere in India, by inventing local ones and transferring to them the same appellations and sanctity as carried by the original ones. Thus they identified the Sindh river with the Ganga; Vitasta with the Yumna and the confluence of Sindh and Vitasta with Prayag.[65] This substituting tendency did not stop here; it came down to the sub-local levels too, as, for instance, we find numerous Gangas spread over in different parts of the Valley.[66]

Given this deep-rooted habit of worshipping sacred shrines, it is not surprising to find the people of Kashmir impervious to the Islamic teachings of *Tauhid*, but quite receptive to "shrine worship". We see in

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[59] Ibid., p.144.

[60] Ibid., p.138.

[61] Ibid., p.138.

[62] Ibid., p.128.

[63] Ibid., p.135.

[64] *Rājataranginī*, i, 38.

[65] Cf. M.A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rājataranginī*, Vol. II, p.335.

[66] For instance, in my village, Nowdal (Tral), there is a place still called Gangabal, where upto the recent times the Pandits of the area used to visit for taking a sacred bath after returning from Amarnath Yatra.

Kashmir structures constructed not only over the graves of saints or for purposes of enshrining their relics, but even where no saint is buried or where no saint has resided and no relic was obtained, the local people have invented one even if that would mean changing the name of "Vishna pad" (Vishnu's foot) into *Kodami-Rasul* (The Prophet's foot).'[67] Little wonder, then, that there is hardly any village that does not have an *asthān* (after Sk. *asthāpan*) either in the form of a beautiful shrine or in the form of a grave or some object in an enclosure, shaded with trees.

Perhaps the most significant example of the local context of the 'shrine worship' is the posthumous function of the saints' cults as many of them have 'functioned in a manner antithetical to the doctrines and deeds of the saint resident in their cultic tomb'.[68] It may be noted that all the Sūfi saints, whose shrines prominently exist in Kashmir, despised worldly attractions, regarded controlling of *nafs* as the key to gain proximity to Allāh and frowned upon all those who visited them for mundane motives. But it is ironic that their shrines have become places of pilgrimage solely for worldly interests. It has been the practice of the Kashmiri Muslims to flock to the shrines with the belief that a visit to and prayer at the shrine would secure the object of his/her worldly wishes. If any one wishes to achieve any material objective he vows to pay *nazar/niyāz* (gift) to any of his/her favourite shrine once the prayer is granted[69]. Also, if there arises any dispute between the two parties over any issue, the negotiator takes them to a shrine for taking an oath with the belief that the liar would incur the wrath of the saint.[70] The supplicants also tie rags *(d'ash)* to the shrines for securing mundane objectives. The rag is left in its place till the objective is realized. The devotee while approaching a shrine makes lowly obeisance, kneels with his face towards it, smears his/ her face, throat and body with the dust of the precincts of the shrine, gazes at it and seeks blessings with folded hands. At the time of the annual day *('urs)* the devotees assemble at the shrines in large numbers leading to annual fairs where men and women mingle freely.

The saints' cults maintained continuity in Kashmir. In this regard we quote Walter Lawrence who wrote towards the end of the 19th century:

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[67] Walter Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 286.

[68] Bruce Lawrence, op. cit., p. 33.

[69] For this practice in medieval times, see *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 272b, 370 ab.

[70] That this practice also obtained in medieval times, see *Asrār al-Abrār*, f. 129b.

> All the veneration in the Kashmiri character comes out as the Musalmans approach a shrine. Lowly obeisances are made, and with bare feet the Kashmiri draws near the doorway and smears his throat and body with the holy dust of the sacred precincts.[71]...Musalmans from all parts of the Valley flock to Charar Sharif, and when scarcity is imminent, where calamities such as earthquake, cholera, and drought occur, thousands gather there and sit silent on the hills around, confessing their sins and begging for pardon.[72].... The annual fairs held at the various shrines are red-letter days in the dull lives of the Kashmiri people. Thousands crowd together and spend the day eating and buying fairings.[73]...The people believe that a visit to the shrines will secure the object of their wishes. Sick men will regain health, women will be vouchsafed children and the litigant will win his case, if a pilgrimage be made to Chrar Sharif or any of the leading shrines. The white rags which are tied to the shrines are placed there by supplicants for offspring, and till a child is born the rag is left in its place.[74]

True, not only the comprehensive code of Islam but also the core teaching of Sūfis– *zabt-i nafs* – and the philosophy behind *ziyārat-i qabūr* (visiting graves) have been swallowed up and usurped by the shrine rituals and the popular belief in the efficacy of the shrines. The *sajjāda-nishīns* and the *mujāwirs*, who developed strong vested interest in popular saints' cults played no less a role in diluting the basic purpose behind visiting the graves of the saints or their institutions.[75]

The belief in the sacredness of the old *asthāpanas* was so paramount that when once Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī intended to cut down the trees of a Hindu shrine, the womenfolk of a neighbouring Muslim family raised such a hue and cry that 'Irāqī was forced to give up the idea.[76] A tree, needless to mention, was an important concomitant of Hindu *asthāpan* – so important that even after their conversion the people planted trees around the tombs of the saints or at places regarded sacred for having some association with the saints. And as in the case of the Hindu *asthāpanas*, the trees of Muslim *asthāns* also assumed sacredness, thanks to the unchanging mentality of the people. This is the reason that till very recent times (and even today at many places) it was sacrilegious to lay axe at what Lawrence calls "brotherhoods of venerable trees."[77] It is also an offshoot of tree worship that in Kashmir there are certain "trees of ordeal" where according to the popular belief, a lying witness is sure to be overtaken with blindness or any other disaster.[78]

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[71] Walter Lawrence, op. cit., p. 286.

[72] Ibid., p.288.

[73] Ibid., p.289.

[74] Ibid., pp.289-90.

[75] How the *mujāwirs* of Muslim shrines cheated the gullible masses, see Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, pp. 414-416.

[76] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp.196-97.

IV

Of the most primitive forms of worship that survived in Kashmir in spite of great religious changes is the *Nāga* worship. *Nāgas* are designated in Kashmir as the tutelary deities supposed to reside in the springs and lakes of the Valley. That from early times considerable importance was attached to the worship of springs believed to be the abodes of *Nāgas* is attested by the long account given of them in the *Nīlamatapurāna*,[79] by the numerous temples erected near the most famous springs[80] and by the popularity and undoubtedly ancient origin of the pilgrimages directed to the latter[81]. It is because of this association of the *Nāgas* with water that a spring to this day is called *nāg* in Kashmir. The popular conception of the *Nāgas* represents them in the form of snakes, living in the water of the springs or lakes protected by them.[82] They can, however, also appear in human shape or may take the from of clouds and hailstorms.[83]

So much crusted was the belief of springs being abodes of spirits with supernatural powers that people could not forget it notwithstanding their conversion to Islam. What is, however, of considerable import for our immediate purpose is that the Rishis and even some Sūfis believed in the sacredness of the springs and held the view that the spirits occupying the springs could assume the form of human beings and snakes. However, they Islamized the belief declaring that the spirits of the springs had been converted to Islam by them.[84] Hardī Rīshī is quoted as having said that the spirits of springs visited him for seeking guidance, and Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī claims to have seen one such spirit in the religious assemblies held at Hardī Rīshī's home during the course of the recital of *Aurād-i Fatthiyah*.[85] This reminds one of the Brāhmanical legend in which a *Nāga* becomes a pious ascetic and the Buddhist lore where he develops into a self-denying saint.[86] All in all, therefore, the Rishis and later Suhrawardīs reinforced the ancient belief of the anthropomorphic attributes of the springs. Even in the beginning of the twentieth century Stein found the influences of *Nāga* worship on the Kashmir Muslims: "The belief in *Nāgas* is fully alive also in the Muhammadan population of the Valley, which in many places has not ceased to pay a kind of superstitious respect and ill-disguised worship to these deities."[87] Mīrzā Haidar Dughlat, Abu'l Fazl and Malik Haidar Chadoora have mentioned in detail many superstitious practices and beliefs followed by the Kashmiri Muslims, owing to the impact of the Nāga cult on them.[88] Suffice it to say that at the time of drought the peasants flocked to worship and made appropriate offerings of sheep or goat at the springs so that the power residing in the springs would be pleased to release the water for irrigating their dry fields.[89] That the Kashmiri Muslims consider the fish of a spring *harām* (forbidden) and do not kill or eat them is understandably the legacy of deep-rooted Nāga cult.[90]

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[77] Walter Lawrence, p.288.

[78] This was also noticed by Lawrence, op.cit., p.294.

[79] *Nīlamatapurāna* . V. 216, 315, 462-63, 678, 845, 849.

[80] *Rājataranginī*, i, notes-30, 31, 32, 33.

[81] Ibid.

[82] *Rājataranginī*, iv, 601; vii, 171.

[83] Ibid., i. 179, 203sqq, 239; iii. 16sqq.

[84] Bābā Nasib, *Nūr-nāma*, ff. 373-75a; Khākī, *Rishī-nāma*, ff. 82b-83a.

[85] Khākī, op.cit., ff. 83 ab.

V

The usage of music, both vocal and instrumental, has maintained continuity in Kashmir notwithstanding remonstrance against it by '*ulamā*'. The reasons are not difficult to seek once we bear in mind the human being's innate proclivity to derive pleasure from listening to sweet music, and the high place of music in the religious scheme of Kashmiris before their conversion to Islam,[91] and the use of music by the higher echelons of the Persian and Central Asian Muslim society. Not the least is the respectability music earned owing to its sanctification by a section of the Sūfis who regarded it as an important aid in attaining ecstasy and love of God, although some leading Sūfis were staunch opponents of instrumental music.

Given the role played by the non-local Sūfi *silsilas*, only three count for the history of Kashmir. They are Kubrāviyya, Nūrbakhshīyya

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[86] J. PH. Vogel, *Indian Serpent-Lore* OR *The Nagas in Hindu Legend And Art*, Preface.

[87] *Rājataranginī*, Book i, note 30.

[88] *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, p. 428; *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, (tr.Jarret), Vol. III, pp. 359, 362-63; Haidar Malik, op.cit., p.106.

[89] *Ā'īn-i Akbarī*, (text), Vol. II, p.353

[90] In Kashmir *nāga gār* (the fish of a spring) has become an idiom for all those things which one can only see but cannot taste or enjoy.

[91] See *Nīlamatapurāna*, *passim*.

(the form in which it was introduced in Kashmir by Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī) and Suhrawardīyya. True, the two great *pīrs* of the Kubrāvī *silsila*–Mīr Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī and Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī– were against instrumental music.[92] It is, however, strange to find a biographer of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī and a Kubrāvī Sūfi, Mulla Haidar Badakhshī, arguing in favour of *samā'*, both vocal and instrumental. He goes to the extent of saying that *samā'* and *wajid* figure among the salient characteristics of Kubrāvī *silsila*, and even makes us believe that Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī had permitted it for the lovers of God.[93] This made Mole include Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī among the important theorists of *samā'*.[94] Considering Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's unambiguous stand against instrumental music together with the strict ban on musical instruments imposed in Kashmir under the influence of his son, Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī,[95] it is hard to digest Mulla Haidar Badakhshī's attributions. Yet, these attributions point to a remarkable change in the attitude of the Kubrāvīs towards *samā'* after Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī: they practised and not abhorred it; and in order to legitimize its use they did not even refrain from concocting stories. That listening to music became a well-established practice of Kubrāvīs is attested by the sources referring to its usage by the prominent Sūfis of the *silsila* like Khawāja Habīb Allāh Hubbī (b. 963 A.H). The latter was so committed to music that the strong protests and tirade of the *'ulamā'* of the time against his indulgence in it only intensified his defense of its usage.[96]

According to the author of *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, *samā'* and *wajid* were a routine matter of Nūrbakhshī Sūfis who considered it *Sunna*.[97] It is interesting to learn from the author that the founder of the *silsila* in Kashmir, Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī, himself practised *wajid* during *mahafil'i samā'*, organised in his *Khānaqāh*.[98] All in all, therefore, *samā'* and *wajid* assumed religious sanctity among the followers of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī.

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[92] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, I. pp.238, 241, 243, 246, 260; Sayyid 'Ali, op.cit., f. 14b. Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī also considers it unlawful if one recites the Qur'ān in singing form. *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, I, p. 258.

[93] *Manqabt al- Jawāhir*, op. cit., pp. 266-277.

[94] Marijan Mole. *La Danse extatique en Islam, Sources Orientals 6, Paris, 1963*, pp.147-228. Vide, Bruce B. Lawrence, "The Early Chishti Approach to Samā'." in Milton Israel and N. K. Wagle (eds.), *Islamic Society and Culture*, pp.72-73.

[95] Sayyid Ali, op.cit., f. 14b.

[96] Muhammad Amin Qadri, "Khawāja Habīb Allāh Hubbi," *Danish*, Department of Persian, University of Kashmir, Vol. VII, 1984, pp. 57-58.

[97] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 137-138, 145-148.

[98] Ibid.

The great Suhrawardī saint, Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm, was against instrumental music; but his foremost disciple and scholar-saint, Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, was an ardent advocate of music. He considered it an essential component of spiritual discipline and justified it by invoking numerous Sūfi authorities.[99]

VI

A peculiar feature of the mode of prayer of Kashmiri Muslims is the loud congregational recitation of *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* (after morning prayers), chanted group recital of *khatmāt* (different forms of *dhikr* prescribed by different *pīrs* and recited on special occasions in the mosques or in the homes), singing of *na't* (praises and invocatory prayers in the honour of Prophet Muhammad) and *manāqib* (praises and invocatory prayers in the honour of saints) in chorus. It is a commonplace among the scholars as well as the average Kashmiri to attribute this peculiarity to the circumstances Islam encountered in Kashmir. It is argued that singing of hymns aloud and beating of drums in temples had assumed such a venerated and devotional place in the religious scheme of the Hindus that for launching a successful conversion movement the Muslim missionaries were left with no alternative but to adjust it to the local religious ethos. Thus it is erroneously believed that Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī compiled *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* especially for Kashmiri Muslims for its loud group recitation[100] so that the habitual hymnsingers do not feel to have been spiritually devitalized. While it is true that the congregational recitation of *aurād* and the singing of *na't* and *manāqib* bordered close to the emotional and demonstrative aspect of the Hindu prayer, which doubtlessly accounted for its wide acceptability and popularity, it is, however, wrong to say that the Sūfi saints made these innovations in Kashmir to adapt Islam to the local circumstances.

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[99] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, II, pp.7-11.

[100] Cf. Ishaq Khan, "Islam in Kashmir: Historical Analysis of its Distinctive Features," in Christian W. Troll, (ed.) *Islam in India*. Vol.2 (New Delhi, 1985). See also his "A Study of Ritual Behaviour and Its Impact on the Evolution of Kashmiri Muslim Society," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations*, Vol. 5, No.1, 1994, pp. 23-33. Although there are repeated statements in his writings leaving no room to doubt the author's firm belief that Sayyid 'Ali compiled *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* especially for Kashmiri Muslims for its loud recitation, I will quote only one such expression by way of an example. It runs as: "That he (Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī) sought co-existence and interaction within a single time or a single evolutionary scale is amply borne out by the ritual of *Aurād-i Fatthiyyah* which originated in a shrine built near the site of the Hindu temple." Mohammad Ishaq Khan, "A Study of Ritual Behaviour," op.cit., p.27.

It may be mentioned that *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* is actually a collection of blessings (*ad'iya*; pl. of *du'a*) and *adhkār* (pl. of *dhikr*), Sayyid 'Ali was bestowed with by about four hundred Sūfi-masters whom he met in the court of Sultān Abū Sa'id in a religious gathering during his noviciate.[101] These *ad'iya* and *adhkār* were compiled by Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī under the title *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* and prescribed it to his *murīds* for recitation much before he visited the Valley.[102] And to be sure, the loud group recitation of *aurād* was not something innovated in Kashmir; instead it formed an important attribute of *tarīqa* Sūfism on account of which it had become a common and favourite form of prayer among the Muslims living in the neighbourhood of Kashmir long before Sayyid 'Ali introduced this practice in the Valley. In this regard it is significant to quote Sayyid 'Ali's own statement he recorded in his *Risāla-i Aurādiyya*:

ولا تجد جماعته من طوائف الحنفية والشافعية وغيرهم من اهل السنته
في اكثر بلاد الاسلام إلّا ولهم اوراد مرتب قلّ و كثر يجهدون به في الاو
قتين بعد الفجر والعصر وانها شغلت كل اناس باما معهم

> In most of the Muslim countries you will not find any group of Hanāfīs, Shāfī's and others, who follow *Sunna*, without reciting a prescribed *aurād*. They recite it aloud in groups twice a day after *fajar* (morning prayers) and *'asr* (afternoon prayers). And each group strictly follows the *aurād* prescribed by its *imām* (leader).[103]

The pre-eminent position held by the group recitation of *dhikr* as a favourite form of worship among the Muslims during the medieval times, has also been highlighted by Marshall G.S. Hodgson in his *magnum opus* – *The Venture of Islam*:

> The distinctive marks of the new Sufism [*tarīqah sufims*] were two: its organisation into these formal orders, *tarīqahs* and its concentration on a formal method of mystical worship, the *dhikr*.... Each devotee was to maintain a private *dhikr* recitation, as assigned to him by the *pīr*, but in addition all might come together in *dhikr* assemblies where commonly the formulas would be chanted aloud in a group. ...*In the Middle Periods the dhikr came to take precedence over other forms of meditation, and in particular the*

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[101] See *Khulāst al- Manāqib*, f. 66a. *Risāla-i Masturāt*, ff. 359a, 368a; *Manqabat al-Jawāhir*, pp.38-40.

[102] Khulasat al Manaqib, ff. 40b-41a; Manqabat al Jawāhir, pp. 27-38.

[103] *Risāla-i Awrādiyya*, f. 40b.

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> *group dhikr became the most prominent activity of tarīqah sufism*[104] [emphasis added].

As a matter of fact, all along its history the practice of reciting *dhikr* has had two types of votaries: those who favoured *dhikr-i khafī* (inward *dhikr*) and those who approved of *dhikr-i jahr* (outword *dhikr*) However, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī quotes the Prophetic traditions in favour of both and enumerates the specific benefits of each of them.[105] He regards loud remembrance good for following grounds, provided it does not disturb the prayer of others:

1. It requires more labour and is, therefore, better, because the more one puts in the labour the better would be the reward.
2. It is aimed to benefit others. To help others is a great virtue.
3. It awakens the heart of the reciter from the sleep of indolence and forgetfulness.
4. The loud remembrance unites heart, mind and ears to understand secret and reality.
5. The loudness removes the sleep.
6. It increases ebullition of recitation and removes laziness.
7. It is expected that others sleeping around would also be induced to worship.
8. The recitation of *dhikr* with effervescence (*jōsh*), yearning and love (*shauq*) creates interest even among those who are in negligence (*ghaflat*).
9. It softens the heart of the reciter and enhances his level of humility and submissiveness (*khushu wa khuzu*).
10. Reciting the Qur'ān in sweet voice is a *sunna*[106]

Given the open-mindedness of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī towards *dhikr-i jahr* and its all-pervasive practice in Muslim lands in the Middle Ages together with its usefulness in the cause of spreading Islam in Kashmir, it is not surprising that the Sayyid recommended *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* to his *murīds* in Kashmir for its loud group recitation.

The Suhrawardīs of Kashmir were also ardent advocates of *dhikr-i jahr*. Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī quotes many Sūfī authorities to support *dhikr-i jahr* in preference to *dhikr-i khafī*.[107] Interestingly enough, recitation of *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* aloud in chorus was also a favourite form of worship among the followers of Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī[108] and Shaikh Nūr al-

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[104] *The Venture of Islam*, Vol. II, pp. 211-212.

[105] *Risāla-i Aurādiyya*, f. 39ab.

[106] Ibid., pp. 40b-41a.

[107] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, I, pp. 545sqq.

[108] *Tuḥfat al-Aḥbāb*, p. 199.

Dīn Rīshī.[109] Naturally, chanting of *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* in chorus became popular in Kashmir among all sections of the people – Sūfis, Rishis, *'ulamā'* and the common folk.

While *Aurād-i Fatthiyah* was recited by all Kashmiri Muslims regardless of the *silsilas* or sects they belonged to, different groups belonging to different *tarīqas* also recited the group *dhikr* prescribed to them by their own respective *pirs*. This is known as *khatm*. *Khatmāt* were recited in the mosques of Kūfā and Basrā as early as the first decade of the 8th century. When Hajāj bin Yūsuf failed to get any news of his military general, Qutaybah bin Muslim and his armies, he ordered the recital of Qur'ān and *khatmāt* for their safe return .[110] Even so, with the emergence of *tarīqa* Sufism, *khatmāt* consisted of not only *dhikr*, *du'a* (prayer) and *darūd* (*du'a* in the honour of the Prophet) but also the invocatory prayers addressed to the Shaikh. That is why in Kashmir no *khatm* is complete without chanting invocatory prayers addressed to the *pīr* in whose honour *khatm majlis* (assembly) is held. And what is remarkable in the context of Kashmir is that the Kashmiris have invented different types of *khatmāt* and attributed them to different *pirs*.[111]

Closely related to the *group dhikr* is the singing of *na't* and *manāqib*. These practices are as old as Islam in Kashmir since all these forms of worship were introduced in Kashmir by Persian and Central Asian preachers.[112] *Na't*-writing and singing goes back to the days of Prophet Muhammad; however, this genre not only flourished in Persia and Central Asia, thanks to the great Iranian poets, but also assumed a popular form of worship as the devotees sang *na't* in chorus in mosques and *khānaqāhs* to satisfy their spiritual yearning and to demonstrate their emotional bonds with the Prophet. Although the Kashmiri *na't*, on the whole, followed the pattern of Persian *na't*, steeped as it is in the peculiar Oriental passion and devotion, nevertheless a distinctive kind of *na't*-writing developed in Kashmir which may be called *faryād* (call for help or redress), a collective prayer to the Prophet. But what is more significant in understanding the local context of this kind of *na't* writing and its recitation is that it reflects the vicissitudes Kashmir has gone through from time to time. From this point of view the *na't* became a cry of despair as well as a solicitation for supernatural succour from an oppressed people. Consider, for example, this popular *na't*, sung in chorus in most of the Kashmiri mosques before the morning prayer:

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[109] Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī, *Rishī-nāma*, f. 83ab.

[110] Narshakhi, *Tārīkh-i Bukhāra* (Pr. tr. Qubawy), p. 65.

[111] Besides the *khatm* of the Prophet, the other *khatmāt* recited in Kashmir are: *khatm* of Shaikh Abd al Qādir Jeelānī, *khatm* of Shaikh Najam al-Dīn Kubrā, *khatm* of Mīr Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī, *khatm* of Khawāja Bahā al-Dīn Muhammad Naqashband, *khatm* of Sayyid Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī, *khatm* of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn Rīshī, *khatm* of Shaikh Hamzā Makhdūm, *khatm* of Shaikh Ya'qūb Sarfī, etc. For details, see Shamas al-Dīn Ahmad, *Shah-i Hamdān: Hayat Aur Karnāmay*, pp.838-880.

[112] While referring to the Jami' Masjid built during the reign of Sultān Sikandar, Śrīvara says, "It was here that the *yavanas* [Muslims] chanted *mantras* and looked graceful like thousand lotuses with humming bees", (Śrīvara, p.235) The contemporary Sanskrit chronicler obviously refers to loud congregational recitation of *aurād* and singing of *na't* and *manāqib* in chorus.

> Oh [morning] wind would you please reach there where the Prophet is taking his rest,
> [And] convey to him my [pitiable] condition; he alone would cure my ailments.
> He is our life; he is our supporter; he is a paragon of virtues, [and] he is our leader and guide,
> Request him with all earnestness [on our behalf] that the poor Kashmiri is crestfallen; he has no sympathizer, no supporter and no friend to fall back upon, nor does he know how to overcome his problems.
> For God's sake help him. He is fallen on the ground; give him legs to stand upon. He is drowned; rescue him.
> He is almost dead; give him life. Given this pathetic condition [of the Kashmiris], this is not the time to turn a deaf ear [to their problems][113]

The *manāqib khwāns* had existed in Iraq since the Būyid period. Writing about the origin and nature of *manāqibīs* A. Bausani says, "Among the propaganda techniques used by the Shi'is to spread their belief and influence was that of the *manāqibīs* or *manāqib khwāns*. *Manāqib* means virtues and *manāqib khwān* is a singer who extols the virtues of 'Ali and his descendents in streets and bazaars. The *manāqibīs* had existed in Iraq since the Būyid period."[114] Though the Sunnis used a different term, namely, *faḍa'il khwāns* [also meaning singers of viruте] to extol the virutes of Abū Bakr and 'Umar,[115] the term *manāqib* gained much currency. However, on account of the paramount influence of *tarīqa* Sūfism in which *pīr* assumed a quasi-divine status, the subject matter of *manqabat* writing and consequently those of *manāqib khwāns* changed from extolling the virtues of Caliphs to that of glorifying the virtues of *pīrs* and their ontological status. As a

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[113] This *na't* was written by a 19th-century poet, Sanā Allāh Kreri.

[114] A. Bausani, "Religion in the Saljuq Period," in J. A. Boyle (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. V, p. 293.

[115] Ibid.

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consequence, with the passage of time, *manqabat* assumed pre-eminently the tenor of an invocatory prayer and intercessory plea the devotees submitted in the honour of *pīrs*. It is this kind of *manqabat* that gained prominence in Kashmir, to such an extent, that Kashmiris came to be called *pīr parast* (worshippers of *pīrs*)

VII

The Rishi movement that emerged in Kashmir at the end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth century is regarded as the typical example of the prodigious survival of past practices and their profound bearing on the Muslims, for, like the Hindu ascetics, the Rishis practised celibacy and sexual abstinence, rejected family life, abstained from meat eating as well as eating of garlic, onion, and leek, strictly believed in not killing animals, inflicted bodily sufferings on themselves and retired to jungles. Given these salient characteristics of Rishi life, it is difficult to disagree with the view which maintains that the Rishi movement is essentially rooted in local tradition. Yet, it is impossible to imagine the Rishi movement holding ground, to say least of becoming popular, had it not received all out support from Sūfism, and had not the Sūfis avowedly sanctified the practices of the Rishis. Sūfism's emphasis on controlling *nafs* and clear rejection of worldly possessions, even to the extent of renouncing the world, provided the Rishi way a comfortable place in the broad framework of Sūfi belief system. In this regard it is significant to refer to what Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī – the undisputed religious and spiritual leader of Kashmiri Muslims – considers crucially important for achieving proximity with Allāh:

> The ways to Allāh are numerous, but they can be broadly divided into three categories. The first is the *rāh-i-arbāb-i-mu'amlat* (the path of those who observe only external rules of the religion). This road is traversed by common Muslims, who perform only the obligatory duties prescribed by the religion and is a means for their salvation. But *wisāl-i-haqīqī* (real union) cannot be performed by such external devotion. The second path is that of *arbāb-i-mujāhadah* (those who undergo self mortification) and is adopted by the *abrār*, the righteous ones of the community. The basic principle of this path is to wean the *nafs* from evil. The third path is followed by the *sā'irān-i-hazrat-i-samdiat* (travellers to the court of the Most High). This is the most perfect and the noblest of all the paths and is based on killing one's own will. Those who traverse this path attach themselves to the eternal and soar high in the space of *lāhūt*, the last stage of the mystic journey. For attaining this stage ten conditions

> are necessary. These are *Taubā, Zuhd, Tawakkul, Qana't, Uzlat, Dhikr, Tawajjuh, Sabr, Muraqabah,* and *Riza.*
>
> *Taubā* is an act by which man can return to Allāh; and the conscious effort in this direction is to give up voluntarily all those things which keep one away from Allāh. *Zuhd* (renunciation) means not only giving up worldly objects and honours but even the desire for these should be renounced. *Tawakkul* (resignation) is an act of stripping oneself of the garments of worldly and beastly desires. The seeker after truth must accept only what is necessary to maintain his existence. *Uzlat* has two stages. In the first stage, the seeker must turn his back on mankind and keep himself away from the people. He must sever all ties, outward and inward, except relations with his *pīr*. In its higher aspect at the second stage of *Uzlat,* a person, although he lives among the people, is isolated from the rest of mankind. *Tawajjuh* means to turn to Allāh entirely. When one turns one's attention to Allāh, his thoughts should be completely absorbed in Him, and should not be distracted by things other than Allāh. *Sabr* (patience) is the basis of all worship and it means to subdue one's carnal self and to inculcate love of Allāh. *Dhikr* is the conscious recollection of Allāh, to the exclusion of all that is other than Allāh, which purifies the self from evil such as jealousy, pride, greed, hypocrisy and dispels the darkness of plurality.[116]

From what Sayyid 'Ali says, it follows patently that controlling of *nafs*, despising the mundane world and its attractions, purifying the heart by constant recitation of *dhikr* and cultivating the love of Allāh were fundamental pre-requisites for obtaining *ma'rifa;* and only those who fulfilled these conditions could achieve the most exalted spiritual position. What is rather more significant to note is that Sayyid 'Ali even recommends permanent solitude by giving up worldly possessions and severing relations with one's family, relatives and the people in general if they would come in the way of purifying one's heart.[117] The biographer of the Sayyid quotes the latter as saying: "My *murshid,* Shaikh Mahmūd Muzdaqānī, was a bachelor and died as bachelor. I, too, had firmly resolved to follow in the foot-steps of my *murshid,* but the people of this country joined hands and forced me to get married."[118]

Since the Rishis were exemplary characters of subduing *nafs*, spurning the world and its comforts, remembering only Allāh to earn

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[116] For details about the Sūfic thought of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī, see *Sufism in Kashmir*, pp. 42-71.

[117] *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*, I. p.344.

[118] *Khulāsat al-Manāqib*, p.540.

His Grace, and since they rejected family life and sweet nourishment only because they were considered a barrier in the way to Allāh, it is not surprising that the great Sūfis of the time regarded Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn Rishi a great 'ārif (Gnostic) gifted with *kashf, mujāhidah* and *mushāhidah*.[119] Also, no wonder, that the tirade of some *'ulamā'* against the Shaikh's 'un-Islamic' practices[120] was waved aside by such a *Shari'at*-conscious Sūfi as Mīr Muhammad Hamdānī who instead regarded him a *Walī*.[121]

Shaikh Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī is categorical in his opinion that family life militates against the Sūfi path. Since along with the Kubrāvīs, the Suhrawardīs played an important role in Kashmir and *'Awārif al- Ma'ārif* was a respectable Sūfi work used as a guidebook by Kashmiri Sūfis, it seems necessary to quote the detailed discussion contained in the book on the efficacy of rejecting family life by those who intend to follow the Sūfi path. It is important to note that this detailed statement has been quoted by Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī to put a seal of legitimacy on his *murshid's* option to live as a bachelor:

> It is more useful for *faqīr* (Sūfi) to remain isolated from wife and children [i.e., not to live a family life.] It proves instrumental in transforming his worries and anxieties into conditions, which make his heart rejoice and his life blissful. Prior to his initiation it is essential for a novice that he should cut off all relations, undertake extensive journeys, put himself in jeopardy, even at the expense of his life, and discard all worldly possessions and, all such things which block his quest such as marriage, tendency from a firm resolve to irresolution, getting trapped in the shackles of family, children, pursuing the ways and means of waywardness, re-conversion from asceticism to worldliness and to cater to one's carnal desires to satisfy human nature and habit. Abū Sulaimān Darānī states that three things force worldliness on a man: first, looking for livelihood; second, marriage with a woman; and third, writing the *Hadīth*. He [even] said that he did not see any of his companions maintaining his spiritual status after marriage. This has been attested to by authentic *Hadīth* as well. In this connection Asāmā Ibn Zaid reports that Prophet Muhammad once said that he [the Prophet] has left no greater contentious object than women with the generation of men to come after him [the Prophet]. Referring to Ma'az Ibn Jabl, Raja Ibn Hayāt states that he [the Prophet] said that when we were

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[119] See *Khat'i Irshād* of Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī which is preserved in the Khānaqāh-i Mu'alla of Srinagar.

[120] Sayyid 'Ali, op.cit., f. 34a.

[121] *Khat'i Irshād*, ibid.

tested on hardships, we bore the brunt gladly. However, when we were tested on generosity, we did not observe restraint. But undoubtedly the worries that I have about you is the fear and apprehension of the problems your wives will cause for you, especially when they will wear golden combs, *saries* of Syria and Yamani silken clothes and be after wealth and cause trouble to their poor and needy husbands by making such demands which they would not be able to fulfill. A wise man has said that the trouble of remaining bachelor is better than the trouble caused by marital life. When asked to comment on women, Sahl Ibn Abdallāh said that men should keep themselves away from them; to bear the brunt of their demands and bitternesses is more troublesome than sitting on fire. And in explanation to this Qur'ānic verse: "Man was created weak", it is understood that a woman is man's greatest weakness and it is beyond his power to overcome it. While explaining this Qur'ānic verse: "Oh! Our lord, save us from that burden which we shall not be able to carry", it is opined that this burden means intense libido urges. If a Sūfi is able to confront with his carnal self by using all the rightful knowledge at his command; and if he succeeds in keeping himself away from women, it would mean that he achieved (spiritual) greatness, made proper use of his intellect and found an easy way to Allāh. The Prophet said that after two hundred years the best person amongst you would be the one who would have a lighter back, i.e. one who would have lesser responsibilities to shoulder. On asking as to who this light-backed man could be, he replied that it would be one who would not have a wife and children. When some pious person was asked to marry, he replied that he was in greater need of liberating his self than fastening it on the charms of wedlock. Bashar Ibn Hārith was once told that the people were talking about you. He enquired what they talked about. They replied that they talked about your abstention from marriage, which is a *Sunna*. He retorted that the people should be told that he gave up the *Sunna* because he was busy with performing *Fard*. Besides Bashar used to say that he was afraid that if he looked after a hen he might momentarily turn into a killer. Since a Sūfi is assessed by his (control on) *nafs* and its demands, he remains busy only with the activity that helps him to keep himself away from the snares of *nafs*. If the demands of a wife are added to the demands of his self, then sloth bars his way to the Truth; his intention is falsified and his resolve weakened. Ibrāhim bin Adham says that the man who is accustomed to enjoying the two thighs of a woman, is undone. Nobody questions the fact that a woman beckons a man to ease and comfort; she is a big hurdle in his quest of getting absorbed in Him and remaining awake during night and observing fast during day. It is because of a woman that the heart is burdened with the fear of poverty and one starts loving boarding. All these things do not afflict

> a celibate. Tradition has it that the Prophet declared it valid for his community to observe celibacy two hundred years after him [the Prophet].[122]

Besides quoting the above statement in extenso, Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī also cites the other Sūfī masters to defend the bachelorhood of his *murshid* and the Rishis. For example, he quotes Shaikh Najam al-Dīn Dāya, author of the famous mystical work *Mirsād al-'Ibād* as saying, that one of the important requirements of following the Sūfī path is that the *murīd* should be a bachelor, alone, and he should sever his relations with his kith and kin so that his heart is not diverted towards them.[123] More noteworthy, however, is that Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī gives a blank cheque to the Rishis and spares no pains to justify the extremities of their ascetic life, even their abstention from eating meat, garlic, leek and onion.[124] Since Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī was the illustrious *khalīfa* of the favourite saint of Kashmir and since he was a great scholar of the time who left behind a long line of followers to carry forward his work (resulting in a great influence of the Suhrawardīs on the Kashmiri Muslims from sixteenth century onwards), it is no wonder, that the Rishi practices got integrated into the broader framework of Kashmiri Muslim religious behaviour.

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[122] Vide, *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, I. pp. 410-412.

[123] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, I. p. 403.

[124] *Rishi-nāma* pp. 50 sqq. See also *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, pp.151-153.

7: Religious Identities in the Syncretic Environment of Kashmir

In the preceding two Chapters we have seen that the mass Muslim society that emerged in Kashmir by the end of the sixteenth century was greatly underlined by the accretions drawn from the local environment. We will see later in this Chapter that the section of the Hindu community, which survived the conversion movement, too, found no other alternative but to give concessions to pragmatism and co-existence. However, notwithstanding the impact of the local environment upon the Muslim society and the compromises made by the Hindus, a common culture, which may be called Kashmiri culture, could not be forged. To be sure, 'the mutual influences and the common economic life touched merely the fringe and the external element of their existence'. Both the communities were so particular to draw the line between themselves that they not only stuck to their faith-oriented views, rituals and ceremonies, but they also maintained marks of distinction in minute details of everyday life. Consequently two cultural streams went hand in hand in Kashmir: one seeing its face through the mirror of Islam and evaluating itself from the standards set by the Ummah (the universal Muslim Brotherhood), and the other through the mirror of its past and Hinduism and the Hindu culture elsewhere.

The ideological considerations and the resultant different images the two communities conjured up for themselves and for each other played a crucial role in demarcating a sharp boundary between them.

It is perhaps needless to repeat that while all other castes and outcastes embraced Islam, the Hindu society of Kashmir was left to be represented by only one caste – *brāhmanas*, locally known as *Bhattas*, famous today as Kashmiri Pandits. These *Bhattas* were in all probability that section of the Kashmiri *brāhmanas* whom Kalhana refers to as 'pure' *brāhmanas*[1] for having their roots in 'Aryadesha.'[2]

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[1] *Rājataranginī*, i. 307; 312-16; vii. 17-19.

being proficient in knowledge and having strictly maintained Sanskritic traditions.[3] That all Kashmiri Hindus, who survived conversion to Islam, refer to themselves and are referred to by other Kashmiri speaking people as *Bhattas* further buttresses our contention.[4] The word is of Sanskrit origin, meaning a learned person and one who is concerned with communicating or telling of what there is to know.[5] This section of the *brāhmanas* had all along arrogated the highest position for themselves vis-a-vis the other categories of *brāhmanas*, non-*brāhmanas* and the *Yavanas* (outsiders). While considering all others ritually impure and scum of the Earth, they regarded themselves as gods of the earth (*bhudev*).[6] And they had such contempt for outsiders that even the *brāhmanas* not belonging to 'Araydesha' were hated and frowned upon.[7] The high philosophical and literary tradition of the community, elevating Kashmir to one of the highest seats of the Hindu learning,[8] further buttressed their notion of being superior to others – the notion which they held till our own times. Referring to the superiority claims of the Kashmiri *brāhmanas* on the basis of supposed spiritual and mental qualities, Tyndale Biscoe writes towards the close of the nineteenth century: "The *brāhmanas* are a proud people, for besides being twice born, they held that they are part of God.... Again a very irritating idea they held and that was their belief in their own superior knowledge".[9] This is exactly what al-Biruni complained about Indian *brāhmanas*, and, of course, about the Kashmiri *brāhmanas*,

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid

[4] Although the Sanskrit chroniclers of the Sultanate period generally refer to the Hindus, who survived conversion, as *brāhmanas*, Śrivara incidentally bears out the fact that the members of the community actually called themselves and were called by others *Bhattas* and not *brāhmanas*. He says that when in retaliation of the "severities" committed by some Hindus, Sultān Haidar Shah punished the guilty, the *brāhmanas* exclaimed, "I am not a Bhatta, I am not a Bhatta", Śrivara, p. 196.

[5] T. N. Madan, *Family and Kinship: A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir* (Second Edition), p. 235. "*Bhatta* is the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit *bhartri*, the honorific designation of learned Brāhmans – it is a synonym of *pandita*. It may be noted here that Kashmiri has been classified as a *Prakrita*." Ibid., fn. 6.

[6] *Rājataranginī*, viii. 2238.

[7] Ibid., i. 306, 312-16.

[8] For Kashmir's reputation as a prominent seat of learning, see Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki*, Vol. II., p.189 (Calcutta ed 1958); Al-Biruni, op. cit., I. pp.126, 135-36, 173, 391; *Rājataranginī*, i. 42.

[9] Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, pp. 274-75.

too,[10] some more than eight hundred years before Biscoe, which shows continuity rather than change in the self-conceited notion of the *Bhattas*. Given their conceit and considering their strong hereditary and family ethos that bred contempt among them for all that was non-Brāhmanic, it was natural to see them showing disdain for Muslims, let alone imitate their culture.

Another factor that hardened the attitude of the Kashmiri *brāhmanas* was their serious apprehension of total annihilation of the community consequent upon the sweeping impact of Islam, once a flexible religious attitude would be adopted and Islamic influences allowed to penetrate in the hearts and minds of the community, especially the younger generation that was more prone to emulating the new culture.[11] The *brāhmana* leadership thus decided to fasten the doors and windows of the community to Islamic influences. For this purpose they launched propaganda against Muslims and their culture to create a cynical attitude of mind against Islam. They called the Muslims by the most derogatory names of the time such as *mlecchas*[12] (impure, unclean) and *yavanas*[13] (lit. outsiders). They were regarded in principle as ritually impure, whose world was of *tamas*[14] (darkness, ignorance). While they projected their own religion in bright colours to build the confidence of the community in its own religion and also to win the converts back,[15] they ridiculed Islam and the practices of the Muslims.[16] They even attributed the natural calamities of the period to the introduction of Muslim culture and its adoption by the local people.[17] This kind of tirade was launched even by those *brāhmana* scholars who were cuddled by the Muslims and even in those works that were written under the patronage of the Muslim rulers.[18]

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[10] Al-Biruni, I. pp. 22-23. It is important to note that al-Biruni also met some Kashmiri *brāhmanas* in Sind and Multan and interacted with them in his quest to know the Indian society in totality.

[11] For a very fast Islamic acculturation among the youth of the *brāhmana* community after mass conversions and cultural supremacy of Islam, see Śrivara, pp. 319-20.

[12] Jonarāja, pp. 56, 59, 60, 74, 77, 82; Śrivara, pp. 120, 196, 236; Śuka, 348, 353, 380, 382.

[13] Jonarāja, pp. 57, 59, 65, 74, 80; Śrivara, pp. 140, 145, 146, 195, 235.

[14] T. N. Madan, "Religious Ideology and Social Structure: The Muslims and Hindus of Kashmir." In Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.) *Ritual and Religion Among Muslims in India*, p. 43.

[15] Śrivara, pp. 192-93, 234-35, 319-20; Śuka, p. 380.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] For example, Śrivara, whom we find representing *brāhmana* propaganda movement against Islam (Ibid.), was the court chronicler and musician of Sultān Zain al 'Ābidīn

In order to carry out a campaign of hatred against Muslims and also to belittle the importance of Islam, the leadership only harped on "forced conversion" and observed discreet silence over the voluntary conversions, even those of rulers.[19] With the fall of Muslim rule the propaganda assumed intense proportions obviously to win the sympathy of the new establishment.[20] The exaggerated account of the royal persecution was also aimed at creating a *community* and asserting its identity and distinctiveness by imposing upon the collective memory of the community a shared past – a bitter past owing to Muslim persecution.[21]

Alongside spreading cynicism against Islam by using myths and memories as the grist of their mill, the *brāhmana* leadership advocated a rigid attitude to be followed by the community to the extent of rejecting almost everything that was alien. Thus they did not approve of even using the Muslim dress or preparing the curries after the Muslim style.[22] What is more, they revived their vision of what a good *brāhmana* ought to be. To put it briefly, a real *brāhmana* was supposed to die rather than to lose his conventions.[23] He had strictly to order his life according to the customs and conventions (*riti*), procedures (*vidhi*) and daily routine (*niyam* or *nityakarma*). A very important component of such ordered conduct was the cycle of rituals (*Samaskara*) which was a must to be followed in respect of each individual, in a prescribed sequence, beginning before birth and ending only after death.[24] The faithful observance of all these rituals together with the belief in age-

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and his successors – Sultān Haidar Shāh and Sultān Hasan Shāh. Śrivara, pp. 99, 135-36, 188-89, 231-234.

[19] For details see Chapter III, pp.111-13.

[20] This is abundantly clear not only from the writings of the Kashmiri Pandit writers (for example, Anand Koul, the author of *The Kashmiri Pandit* written in 1924) but also from European travellers, including Walter Lawrence. Having written on the authority of verbal information provided to him by the Kashmiri Pandits, Lawrence's *The Valley of Kashmir* contains fantastic stories of Muslim persecution. Lawrence, pp. 190-91, 195-198.

[21] For an excellent observation on Kashmiri Pandits' distortions of history to suit their private interests and the changing cultural values, see Henny Sendar, *The Kashmiri Pandits: A Study of Cultural Choice in North India*, Intr. pp. XVI- XVII, 2.8,14.

[22] Śuka, p. 380.

[23] Jonarāja, pp. 60-61; Śuka, pp. 339, 340, 353. For the continuity of the *brāhmana* elites' persistent efforts to inculcate the spirit of "martyrdom" among the community members when encountered with a wave to change, see Anand Koul, op. cit., pp. 10, 21-22 49.

[24] For details, see T N. Madan, *Family and Kinship*, op. cit., pp. 246-47.

old usages and customs and even superstitions by the community till our own times[25] testifies to the leadership's resolve to defend and strictly follow all that was associated with their belief system to forestall any danger of the erosion of its religious identity in the wake of any compromise with any of its rituals or beliefs. As the community performed a multitude of rituals and had the distinction of having a plethora of cultural symbols, its ossification was a natural corollary. After all, the greater the congruence of the number of rituals, beliefs and cultural markers, the more is the potential of the sense of religious identity.

Just as the *brāhmanas* were uppish with the Muslims and nagged at them, the Muslim preachers also up-braided the former incisively. They were called *kufār* (misbelievers), *mushrikīn* (polytheists) and *buthparast* (idol worshippers).[26] Since the belief system of the Hindus presented a sharp contrast to Islamic values, the Muslim preachers did not compromise with any of their practices and launched a persuasive campaign of total Islamization of the culture of the converts. It is important to note that what appears to us a local impact upon the Muslim society was actually an extension of the syncretic Islam that had accrued from the compromises made by the Persian and Central Asian Muslims with their local environment long before they exported it to Kashmir. It is, therefore, observable that the Muslim preachers approved of or maintained silence over those local practices only which fitted in the broader framework of Islamic culture that had evolved in Persian and Central Asian environment over the centuries. And what did not fall in line with it, the religious leadership did not live in concord with it, instead it fought to finish it.

The Islamization of culture of the converts was also aimed at winning irreversible and perfect conversions, especially when the *brāhmana* leadership had not compromised with the mass conversions[27]; and when there were instances of some people oscillating.[28]

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[25] For details about the continuity of beliefs, customs, usages and superstitions among the Kashmiri *brāhmanas* since ancient times, see *Nīlamatapurāṇa* (Eng. tr. Ved Gahi); Alexis Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Brāhmans of Kashmir." In Carrithers et al. eds., *The Category of the Person*, pp. 190-216; Tyndale Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, pp. 153-161, 274, 278, 300; Water Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 258- 267; Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*; T.N.Madan, *Family and Kinship*, op. cit., S.N.Pandit, *Kashiren Battan Hindi Rasam Ta Rewaj*.

[26] Cf. Sayyid 'Ali, *Tārikh-i Kashmir*, *passim*; *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, *passim*; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, *passim*.

[27] Supra, pp. 128, 209.

[28] Supra, p. 69.

The Muslim preachers, therefore, persuaded all those who embraced Islam to change their names after the Muslim fashion, perform circumcision, observe *namāz* and *rozah*, build mosques in place of temples and to give up idolatry and drinking of wine.[29] Not only this, they also made them change their style of dress, take beef, learn Persian and Arabic, take to Muslim education, science and technology, architecture, ceremonies, fairs and festivals.[30]

As a matter of fact, the Muslim missionaries gave much emphasis on changing the cultural markers of the converts to mark them out from the non-Muslims. This is why the Islamic missions to Kashmir comprised experts who belonged to different professions.[31] Missionaries like Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī could not put up with a Muslim wearing a dress not after the cuts and fashions of the Muslims of Persia and Central Asia.[32] Following such a sustained movement of Islamization a saga of cultural transformation was ushered in the belief pattern, mode of worship, nature of religious and educational institutions, architecture, dress, diet, ceremonies, customs, fairs and festivals. The intruding culture caused such an upheaval in Kashmir that it was compared by the contemporary *brāhmana* scholars with a 'wind' that 'destroys the trees'[33], or the 'locust' that destroys 'the *shālī* crop'[34].

There is, however, no need to labour the argument that the most important factor that kept the two communities mutually exclusive out and away is their diametrically opposite belief systems. For example, while Brāhmanism is essentially pantheistic, Islam is fundamentally monotheistic. Thus while idolatry and object worship was at the centre of *brāhmana* belief system, there was, on the other hand, nothing more objectionable in Islam than idol worshipping. That is why all the Muslim preachers took issues with the local tradition on idolatry[35] and considered object worship the main element of *kufur*.[36] Although the Muslim religious leadership ultimately succeeded in completely weaning away the converts from idolatry and even inculcated among them a strong contempt for it, the *brāhmanas*, however, continued to stick to image worship. They had so much faith in idols that when the Muslim preachers challenged their belief in godly powers of idols and other objects regarded sacred by them, the *brāhmanas* refused to yield, instead they maintained that the 'images became mere stones' because 'the gods relinquished their power' as 'the kingdom of Kashmira was polluted by the evil practices of the *mlecchas*'.[37] All in all, therefore, what one rejected the other respected and what formed the faith of one came to be ridiculed by the other.

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[29] Cf. *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, pp. 57, 191-193, 200-220; *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, II, pp. 76-80; Bābā Nasīb, ff. 415a-417ab.

[30] Ibid.

[31] See my article "Modes of Technology and Culture Transmission from Central Asia to Kashmir," in B.K. Daembi (ed.) *Kashmir and Central Asia*, pp. 61-74.

[32] Sayyid 'Ali, 5a; *Bahāristani Shāhī*, ff. 10b, 11a; Haidar Malik, p.42.

[33] Jonarāja, pp. 57-58.

[34] Ibid.

[35] It is interesting to note that even Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn made out a case against idolatry and won many important personalities to Islam by convincing them against polytheism. Cf. Sayyid 'Ali, ff. 37b-38a.

It is true that the conversion of mentality was not possible to be achieved overnight. Yet, armed with the experience of Islamization of local beliefs in their own home lands, the Persian and Central Asian preachers and subsequently the local saints Islamized many age-old impervious local beliefs and practices so as to look entirely different in appearance, albeit without prejudice to the psychological dispositions of the converts. Thus the faith in the old *asthāpanas* was *kufur*, but the visits to the tombs of the Muslim saints were permitted and even encouraged.[38] They were even allowed to perform practices which ultimately earned them the epithet of 'saint worshippers'.[39] The faith in the spirits possessed by the old *asthāpanas* could not be eradicated, but the Muslim preachers succeeded in making the Muslims believe that they were evil spirits, which could not withstand the supernatural powers of the Muslim saints.[40] Thus in Kashmir almost all the evil spirits (*tasrufdārs*), which cause mental delirium to all those who fall prey to them, bear Hindu names.[41] A *ta'wīz* (amulet) from a Muslim *pīr* is sufficient to make the evil spirit surrender[42]. The spirits of some famous springs of Kashmir were *kuffār* (misbelievers) before they were supposedly converted to Islam by the Muslim saints.[43] Instead of holding festivals at old *asthāpanas*, they were now held at the tombs of the saints. The name of the word festival also changed from *deva'i* to '*urus* (commonly called *warūs*)[44]. To seek the blessings for mundane needs, the Muslims generally thronged to the Sūfis and *pīrs* and not the Hindu *sādhūs.*[45] Even the Hindu astrologers were replaced by Muslim astrologers.[46] Some of the practices of the Muslim Rishīs which clearly seem to be Hindu and Buddhist accretions were justified not on the basis of strong local traditions and values but on the authority of the writings of great Sūfi masters.[47]

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[36] Sayyid 'Ali, *passim*; *Tuhfat al- Ahbāb*, *passim*; *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, *passim*.

[37] Jonarāja, p. 59.

[38] See Chapter VI.

[39] Cf. Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 286-290.

[40] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 205-208.

[41] Local informants.

[42] Lawrence, op. cit., p. 233., also local informants.

[43] Khākī, *Rīshī-nāma*, op. cit., ff. 71b-83ab; Bābā Nasib, ff. 373a-75a.

The ethical teachings of the Muslim saints and their zeal to change the basic structure of the value system of the converts, no doubt, found only a few recipients. The fact, however, remains that the first and the crucial stage of Islamization was accomplished by convincing the converts to believe in and practise certain values that were quite antithetical to the Brāhmanical institutional system. After all, the first requisite to claim to be a Muslim was to recite and to believe in "There is no God but God and Prophet Muhammad is His Messenger". The Qur'ān and Hadith were to be regarded as the sources of Islamic religion though the great Sūfi works were no less religious guides of great respectability, and tradition could not be totally parted with. Besides the religious scriptures, the nature and form of worship also changed. Worshipping of idols and objects of nature was replaced by offering *namāz* and observing *rozah*, and chanting of *mantras* by reciting *aurād* and *na't* in chorus. Worshipping in the company of women and drinking has no place in the religious scheme of the Muslims,[48] austerity being the hallmark of Islam. Temples, *asthāpanas* and *mathas* were changed for mosques, *khānaqāhs* and tombs of saints whose style and appearance was also distinctive. The stone architecture of the religious places was replaced by wood and brick. The old places of pilgrimage to Naubandha Hill, Amarnāth, Khīr Bhavānī, Mach Bhavan, Kōh-i Mārān, Shish Nāg, etc.,[49] were substituted by the pilgrimages to the abodes of saints, their tombs and shrines. While the well-to-do Hindus visited Hardwar, Prayag, Kashi and Jugannath, the well-to-do and devoted Muslims paid a pilgrimage to Makka and tombs of reputed saints of Persia and Central Asia. Instead of the Hindu festivals, like *Naureh, Treh, Jeth Ashtamī, Janam Asthāmī, Hairat*, etc., the Muslims celebrated *'Īd al-fitar, ' Īd al-zuhā, ' Īd-i Mīlād al-Nabī* and the *'urs* of the saints.[50] Now not investure of sacred thread, but circumcision was of crucial importance for a Faithful. The Muslims buried the dead instead of cremating them; not *mantras* and elaborate rituals but *fātiha* and the recitation of the Qur'ān and giving away alms in the name of the dead were considered necessary for the peace of the departed soul. While the cow was sacred to the Hindus, conversion to Islam was considered incomplete without taking beef.[51] Hindu marriages become irrevocable by the ritual called *sapta padi*, Muslim marriage contract assumes legality by performing *nikāh*. Unlike the Hindus, the Muslims can marry within the kin and even cousins are permitted to marry each other.[52]

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[44] Not only during the ancient and medieval times the fairs held at the Hindu places of pilgrimage were called *devo'i* (*Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f.27ab) but even today they are named as such. However, the fairs held at the Muslim shrines have never been called *devo'i* but are invariably called '*urus* (commonly *warūs*).

[45] It is very seldom that we find Muslims visiting Hindu sādhūs. Once, according to Śuka, Daulat Chak called on a *brāhmana* saint and asked him how to save the kingdom from an imminent catastrophe. The saint replied "by ceasing to levy the annual tax from *brāhmanas*." To this Daulat Chak replied, "How can I, who am a *mleccha*, stop by your order levying tax from *brāhmanas*?" Śuka, p. 382.

[46] *Tadhkirat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 470b-471a.

[47] Cf. Khākī, *Rīshī-nāma*, ff. 64a-72b.

[48] That drinking formed an important feature of Hindu festivals, see Śrivara, p.124; *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp. 181-186. "And every woman of a Pandit always sits on left of her husband whenever they have to perform a religious ceremony". Tyndale Biscoe, op.cit., p.101.

Seeing themselves different from each other in view of their diametrically opposite religious beliefs and practices, and regarding each other ritually impure or morally abhorrent, the two communities observed different degrees of mutual avoidance. As both of them stuck to their guns to maintain their religious identities, communal not secular pattern of neighbourhoods became a religious, social and psychological necessity. This does not, however, mean that the two communities lived in separate villages and towns as it was not practical considering the total dependence of the *brāhmana* community upon the Muslims for goods and services. The fact is that both the communities lived in the same city, town and village, but in separate quarters and *muhallas*. Initially, when the Muslims were in a minority, it was they who used to live in separate quarters for being *mlecchas* and *yavanas* and thus ritually impure for contact.[53] But when the mass conversions took place, the *brāhmanas*, who refused to embrace Islam, preferred to live together rather than to be dispersed in the predominant Muslim population. There are a few quarters of historic Srinagar which continue to be dominated by Hindu population.[54] In villages, too, the Hindu families invariably lived together as neighbours in separate quarters – a practice that still holds good.[55]

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[49] For details about these Hindu places of pilgrimage, see Lawrence op.cit., pp. 296-99.

[50] Ibid., pp. 265-66.

[51] *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, pp.200-223.

[52] While defending his argument that the Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims retained their separate identities by following their own customs and practices, Madan says, " The emphasis upon agnation, so pronounced among the Pandits, is not a typical characteristic of the Muslim kinship system. In fact, close affinal ties are accorded greater social importance than distant kinship ties..." Madan, *Family and Kinship*, pp. 192-93. fn.1.

Also, the two communities maintained no social intercourse with each other by way of interdining or intermarriage. The Kashmiri *brāhmana* would never eat cooked food or even that touched by a Muslim. Even the shadow of a non-*brāhmana* would pollute the food. The *Lejibat* legend recorded by a recent Kashmiri *brāhmana* writer sufficiently indicates the *brāhmana* community's implacable notion of ritual impurity of the Muslims whose touch would be defiling. The legend reads as:

> During the Muhammadan rule some Brahmins were once given option to either submit to the sword or take food prepared by a Musalman. They naturally quivered at the prospect of death and unwillingly accepted the latter alternative, but, in their anguish to reduce pollution to its minimum, made the Musalman cook boil rice in a new *lej* or earthen cooking pot and when ready they took it out from the *lej* with their own hands and reluctantly ate it. They afterwords expaciated for the forcible pollution by performing *prayashchitta* but still the Biradari, who were as punctilious as ever, ostracised them, condemning them for not having preferred death to losing their caste by pollution as thousands others had boldly done under such circumstances. Their descendants are called Lejibat because of their ancestors having eaten food cooked by a Muhammadan in a *lej*... No Brahmin will take food touched by a Lejibat.[56]

Writing in the late nineteenth century, a Christian missionary was surprised to observe the caste inhibitions of the Kashmiri *brāhmanas* with regard to dining in the company of non-*brāhmanas*: "To start with, they could not eat with any person who was not twice-born; they could not eat with their Maharaja ... for he was of a lower caste being of the Kshatri caste. They only eat food cooked by a Brahmin".[57]

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[53] Malecchmar, a quarter in Srinagar stands a monumental testimony of Muslims having lived together away from Hindu population during the times when they formed a microscopic minority of the local population.

[54] For example, Habba Kadal and Rainawari.

[55] Based on my personal information.

[56] Anand Koul, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

[57] Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 265.

Though for the norms of caste ethics that precluded the *brāhmanas* from engaging in an occupation considered polluting, the Kashmiri Pandits were forced to accept the milk of a Muslim milkman but they were not expected to drink the milk from a container belonging to a Muslim.[58] Likewise though they had no other alternative but to seek the services of a Muslim barber, they had to take a bath after having been served by the latter on special ritual occasions as the Muslim barber's touch was polluting.[59]

The Muslims and the Pandits also did not share *hookah* between themselves. The mutual avoidance in this regard still holds good. To quote T.N. Madan: "A Pandit does not touch any part of the Muslim hookah–its vase of water, pipe or *chillum* (tobacco-cum-fire bowl). A Muslim is allowed to smoke the *chillum* of a Pandit *hookah* by holding it between the palms but is never allowed to use the pipe".[60] The Kashmiri Pandits also did not allow Muslims to enter into their kitchens and into any room where rituals usually took place.[61]

The Muslims, too, avoided taking food cooked by the Hindus. Madan quotes the explanation given by the Muslims for not eating Pandit food: "It is *haram* (forbidden); the Koran prohibits it is the most general explanation given; when pressed to elaborate upon the cryptic remark, some informants used the word *napak* (impure) to describe the Pandit food".[62] However, the Muslims had no taboo for physical contact with the Pandits. The latter had free access to all parts of the Muslim house.[63]

Although before the mass conversion to Islam Hindu-Muslim marriages were not inconceivable, as we find Muslim rulers having Hindu wives,[64] nevertheless the trend changed when Hindu society was survived by the *brāhmanas* only. The inter-communal marriages became a thing of the past with *brāhmana* community's overriding concern to preserve its religious identity. As a matter of fact, even during the aura of inter-communal marriages, the *brāhmana* caste had opted to be conventional, making it an affair only between Muslims and non-*brāhmana* castes of Hindu society.[65] Since the marriage of a

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[58] Madan, *Religious Ideology and Social Structure*, op. cit., p. 44.
[59] Ibid., p. 45.
[60] Ibid., p. 44.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Jonarāja, pp. 27, 41-43, 54.
[65] Ibid.

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Hindu lady with a Muslim entails the former to embrace Islam to make it a legal contract, the Pandit community adopted a tough attitude against allowing their girls to marry the Muslims. This is besides the fact that the latter were *mlecchas* and, therefore, disqualified for physical contact. Muslims are also forbidden by their religion from giving their daughters in marriage to Hindus if the latter do not embrace Islam before entering into marriage contract.

Despite having initially shown more interest in changing the ritual behaviour of the converts, the Muslim preachers also broached the subject of all-embracing Islamic way of life through their writings, sermons and educational curricula with the objective of bringing home to the Muslims the Islamic world view and values so that their outlook and behaviour would stand clearly demarcated from that of the non-Muslims.[66] True, it was not possible to bring a dramatic change in the mentality and attitudes of the people. Yet, the preachers put forth before the Muslims the criteria of what a Muslim ought to be; and thus accounted for their conceptual separation from Hindus. That is why, when a Kashmiri Muslim admonishes another Muslim for any action that is repugnant to Islamic values, he reminds him by turning his nose up at him: "Are you not a Muslim"? 'Does it behove a Muslim'?, and the like.

The Islamic teachings aimed at bringing structural changes did not fall through altogether. Take, for example, the impact of Islam's disbelief in caste system. Unlike the Hindu places of worship, the Muslim religious places were not only open to every Muslim but all rich and poor, high born and low born could rub shoulders with one another. While in the mosques all Muslims were rated equally, in the *khānaqāhs* the position of the inmates was determined on the sole criterion of their respective religious and spiritual positions.[67] It is true that the Muslim society was divided into different groups, each with a particular background known by the generic term *zāt* or *qaum* yet, unlike the caste system, *zāt* signified innate nature, occupation, culture, ethnicity and religious background and not ritual purity of the group. Some examples are: *bad-zāt* (evil natured), *gries zāt* (*zāt* of peasants), *kryala zāt* (*zāt* of potters), *wa'n zāt* (*zāt* of Wanis' —shopkeepers') *pīr-zāt* (*zāt* of *pīrs*) *bhatta zāt* (*zāt* of *Bhattas*),[68] etc. It is also true that the

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[66] See, for example, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī's *Dhakhīrat al-Mulūk*. And for the books that formed the curricula of higher learning, see Khākī's *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*.

[67] *Manqabat al Jawāhir*, op. cit., p. 10.

[68] For a brilliant discussion on *zāt*, see Madan, *Religious Ideology and Social Structure*, op. cit., pp. 25 sqq.

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different occupational groups were characterized by a low degree of occupational mobility and a high degree of endogamous marriages. However, it was not the religious factor but the compulsions of practical life that lay at the root of these cultural regularities. Writing about the rationale of endogamous marriages among Kashmiri Muslim occupational groups Madan says, "Endogamous marriages are desirable for reasons of compatibility. There often are differences in the life-styles of different groups. Boatman and *Mallah* are too good examples. Moreover, women often help men in their chores: a Carpenter's daughter would obviously be of no help to a Potter or a Barber's daughter to a Boatman".[69] Madan is also supported by some common maxims in Kashmir: *zāchi z'th; pāchi-pa't* (rag to rags; a new piece to a new cloth) or *heyes hu chuu ni'amat, bai-sūmis qiyamat*. (To have a partner of equal status is a blessing; but a hell if otherwise). Such observations by the Kashmiri Muslims emphasise the point that economic and cultural compatibility is a fundamental pre-requisite for a successful marriage alliance. The cultural factor also accounted for the *sayyids*' preference to marry within the group. But once any non-*sayyid* family achieved matching cultural standards with that of a *sayyid* family, in that case the *sayyids'* showed no hesitation in entering into matrimonial relations outside their own group.[70] This was a definite departure from the 'ritual purity'- based endogamous marriages of the *brāhmanas*. In effect, Muslim identity is a plastic phenomenon: if a Muslim changes his behaviour in a significant way, he also changes his identity. To quote Lawrence, "The social system in Kashmir is delightfully plastic and I know one or two instances of boatmen who have within recent times abandoned their boats and taken to agriculture. These men are now on an equality with the agricultural families and can intermarry with them. Similarly I know of an agriculturalist who has degraded himself by taking up the work of a market-gardener, in which the use of *poudrette* is essential. This man must now contract marriage alliance with other market-gardeners, for he is cut off from the families of the agricultural Musalmans."[71]

Doubtless, Islam did not completely eradicate the importance of birth in determining one's social status; nevertheless, the Kashmiri Muslim society never considered genealogy as the sole factor in fixing the position of a Muslim. Piety, knowledge and economic status have been important constituents in status determination. Although some *sayyids* claimed high position on the basis of rich descent, the Kashmiri Muslim society refused to honour their claim unless their practical life was compatible with their supposed pedigree. This is the reason that the pseudo-*sayyids* and pseudo- *'ulamā'* became a butt of social ridicule and sunk to lowest depths in public estimation.[72] On the contrary, Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn, a *dōmba* by *zāt*, became a highly revered saint for his proverbial piety characterized by control on *nafs*.[73]

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[69] Ibid., p. 31.

[70] Supra, p 191 fn 340.

[71] Lawrence, op. cit., p. 307.

Among Muslims there was also nothing like division of labour, as laid down by caste system. Nor did the religious section look down upon the working class professions. Conversely, the Muslim saints advised their disciples to follow the pursuits of agriculture and crafts in order to earn honest living.[74] Sayyid Sadar al-Dīn and Sayyid Ahmad Luristāni were the great masons who constructed the famous Jami' Masjid of Srinagar.[75] It is a truism that because of the economic and attitudinal factors, occupational groups were very reluctant to change their hereditary callings; which is why even religious education came to be concentrated in the hands of a hereditary religious group. But there was a big difference – unlike Brāhmanism, Islam did not debar a Muslim from leading an independent life in matters of choosing careers.

The Muslim society also shaped itself differently vis-a-vis the *brāhmana* notion of untouchability. The Muslim divines not only mingled with the lower sections of the society, but they also introduced the *trāmī* system of serving meals at the time of feasts – a speciality of Kashmiri Muslim culture.[76] According to this system four Muslims eat jointly from one *trāmī* (a big plate) which is radically contrary to Hindu behaviour. Thus while the Hindus considered such acts ritually polluting, Muslims encouraged such practices as expressive of an entirely different value system of Islam that emphasizes equality. The only section of Muslim population that is not allowed to share the plate is the *wātals*.[77] However, as Madan says, "their notion of pollution is in

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[72] See supra, p. 192.

[73] *Bahāristān-i Shāhī*, f. 26b; Haidar Malik, (folioed copy) ff. 94b-96a.

[74] *Chilchilat al-'Ārifīn*, ff. 10a, 21a.

[75] Sayyid 'Ali, f. 13b; Haidar Malik, p. 44; *Asrār al-Abrār*, ff. 60b-61a.

[76] The sources are no doubt silent about the introduction of *trāmī* system in Kashmir; yet, considering that it is against *brāhmana* ethics and that it was in vogue among the Muslims in Persia and Central Asia, one can safely conclude that this practice was introduced in the Valley by the Muslims during the period of our study.

[77] The principal occupation of the *wātals* was the manufacture of leather. They preferred the hides of dead cattle, buffaloes, sheep and goat. There were two groups

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principle different from the Hindu notion in as much as they do not consider it permanent."[78] With giving up their unclean job and improving their economic and cultural status, the *wātals* like any other lower stratum of the society can live down the stigma of their *zāt*.

Curiously enough, Islam had hardly any impact upon the *brāhmana* society's caste notions. Perhaps no words other than those of a Kashmiri *brāhmana* writer of early twentieth century can better reveal his '*Biradari's*' firm faith in caste system, which it maintained upto his own times. Boasting of the 'separate life' kept up by Kashmir-i *brāhmanas*, he says:

> They [the Kashmiri *brāhmanas*] followed, as they follow now, the Sanatana or eternal dharma and observed, as they do now, the varna-eshrama or caste system. They consider the caste system the most reasonable form of society possible, it having done much for the division of labour, for the preservation of skill and learning and for the physique and the purity of the higher castes.[79]

There was a set behaviour pattern that was to be strictly followed by each *brāhmana* ; and if any one deviated, even though slightly, from it he had to lose his 'purity' and was even excommunicated. Some anecdotes mentioned by Anand Koul are illustrative enough to show how some *brāhmana* families got cut off from the 'pure *brāhmanas*' for their minor deviations from the caste rules. Besides 'Lejibat' whom we have referred to above, the other 'polluted' *brāhmana* groups were *Wurud* or *Purbi* "who are the illegitimate offspring or are of a mixed union in which one of the parents is a Brahmin and the other a Khatri. No Brahmin will take food touched by *Lejibat* or *Wurud* or *Purbi*."[80] Even the learning of Persian by some *brāhmanas* divided the community into two endogamous groups – *Kārkun* and *Bachabattas*.[81] Since the latter stuck to Sanskrit learning, they were the *brāhmanas par-excellence*.[82]

The belief in untouchability was so deep seated among them that touch with a non-*brāhmana*, howsoever great he would be, was

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of *wātals*, those who abstained from eating carrion and those who ate the flesh of dead animals. The *wātals* of first group made boots and sandals, while the *wātals* of the second group manufactured winnowing traps of leather and straw and performed the duties of scavengers. For details, see Lawrence, pp. 314-315.

[78] Madan, op. cit., p. 53.

[79] Anand Koul, op. cit., p. 5.

[80] Ibid., p.22.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Madan, *Religious Ideology and Social Structure*, op. cit., p. 39.

avoided for fear of defilement. As late as the close of the nineteenth century Tyndale Biscoe was astonished to notice it: "In the days of my apprenticeship I learnt I must not touch my [*brāhmana*] pupils for fear of defiling them, for in a forgetful moment I would pat them on the back or head to cheer them up at which they would squirm as if I were a leper or one of the un-touchables."[83]

The Kashmiri *brāhmanas* also maintained their abhorrence for working class pursuits in spite of having lost all the other three castes and outcastes to Islam. Huxley who visited Kashmir in the 1920's remarks: "The Kashmiri Pandit has more than Spanish objection to manual labour".[84] This is also substantiated by Biscoe: "They (the Kashmiri *brāhmanas*) held firmly to the belief that a gentleman did not work".[85] He further says that it took him six years "to persuade the Brahmin school boys to get into a Kashmiri boat and propel it with peddles, and when they made their first trip they covered their heads with blankets to hide their identity so that they should not bring disgrace upon their families".[86]

To be sure, the *brāhmanas* held to their convictions so much that they did not even give up believing in their primitive notions. Thus their 'whole life is pervaded by a sense of auspiciousness ... and by the fear of inauspiciousness.'[87] Believing in good and bad omens, they considered appearance of comet, barking of dogs during day time, eclipse of moon and sun, hooting of owls, birth of twins of a mare in the king's stable, wandering of wild animals in habitations during day time, birth of kittens from the bitch, reddening of sky, crossing one's way by a serpent, frightening of horse at the time of mounting on him, etc., bad omens leading to disasters and calamities.[88] If any one would leave his home for some work and an ugly woman, a widow or a one-eyed person or a dog or a donkey happened to come from the opposite direction, the person had either to retreat his steps or pass the time in great anxiety, fearing some misfortune.[89] One would never begin to do

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[83] Tyndale Biscoe, p. 267.

[84] Aldous Huxley, *Jesting Pilate*, 1926, p. 30. Vide, Madan, *Family and Kinship*, op. cit., p.21.

[85] Tyndale Biscoe, op cit., p. 268.

[86] Ibid. p.300.

[87] Madan, *Family and Kinship*, p. 243.

[88] Śrivara, pp. 153-54, 195, 262, 322; Śuka, pp. 373, 394; S.N. Pandit, op. cit., pp. 223 sqq.

[89] Ibid.

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anything, if some one sneezed.[90] No work was undertaken and not even new clothes were put on unless it was confirmed whether it was auspicious time (*sāth*).[91] Crows, owls and kites were ominous birds, while bulbuls, swallows and hoopoes were considered fortunate.[92]

The Muslims and Hindus did not only distinguish from one another in their respective faith-oriented beliefs, practices, customs and institutions; they distinguished in appearance too. The Hindus were readily differentiated from Muslims in dress. It is true that the Kashmiris had a national dress called *pheran,* its cut, as is true of today, too, varied on communal lines. The *pheran* of a Muslim woman extended the knees; and the well-to-do among them got it embroidered in the front and along the edges. On the other hand, a Hindu woman's *pharan* was long, loose, sleeved and plain. The *pheran* of the Pandit male was long, its sleeves tight and almost twice as long as a man's arm. The *pheran* of the Mussalman was short with full sleeves. The Hindu males tied their *pheran* on the left, while the Muslim did so on the right side.[93] Another distinguishing feature of the Pandit's *pheran* was that its few inches were invariably stitched between its waist and bottom. It is called *lād* or *lādi*. The Panditanis tied a piece of cloth round their waists over the *pheran*, while the Muslim women wore no girdle.[94] The Panditanis wore no drawers,[95] whereas these were invariably used by the upper class Muslim women, making a fashion for other Muslim women to emulate. The Muslim women wore a thick turban like red cap studded with pins. It was called *qasāba*. A piece of cloth was thrown over the *qasāba* which covered the back.[96] The head dress of a Pandit woman was called *taranga* – a white round turban, which was tied to a hanging bonnet and tapered down to the heels from behind.[97] The upper class Muslim women also used a veil called *burqa*. The ornament which distinguished a married Panditani from a married Muslim woman was *dejihor*.[98] Similarly a Pandit unmarried girl differed from an unmarried Muslim girl in that the former wore a skull cap.[99]

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[90] Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 159; S. N. Pandit, op. cit., pp. 209 sqq.

[91] Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 159.

[92] S.N. Pandit, op. cit., pp. 209 sqq

[93] Lawrence, op. cit., p. 250; Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 139.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Dugeal, *Letters from India and Kashmir*, London, 1874, p. 117; P.N. Bazaz, *Daughters of Vitasta*, p. 198.

[97] Wakefield, *The Happy Valley of Kashmir*, 1879, p. 106.

[98] Lawrence, p. 262. The *dejihor* is an ear-ornament of Kashmiri Pandit woman. It was, as today, considered essentially a symbol of married life.

The dress of the upper class Muslim males was similar to that of rich sections of Persia and Central Asia. It consisted of a *qamīs* (chemise) with full sleeves that covered the upper portion of the body. The lower portion was covered by *sarāwīl* (wide trousers of Persian origin). The outer robes were called *chōghā, qaba*, and *'abā.*[100] The religious class wore neither silken clothes nor those having saffron colour.[101]The *brāhmana* community boycotted wearing Muslim dress and wore tight drawers.[102] The Muslims wore a skull cap (*kullah*) with raised patterns covered with a broad piece of cloth, never more than ten yards in length. This formed the turban (*dastār).*[103] The Hindus also wore turban but their skull cap was smooth, covered with narrow white cloth of twenty yards in length.[104] The Pandit wore the *tuck* of his turban on the right, the Musalman on the left.[105] The Muslims wore leather shoes and leather caps;[106] to a Hindu all leather was anathema.[107]

No Hindu's toilet was complete unless he/she put a sectorial mark (*tilak*) of saffron on his/her forehead.[108] And similarly every *brāhmana* wore a holy thread (*yuni*), which was thrown over the left shoulder and under the right arm-pit.[109] The Muslims generally wore amulets (*ta'wīz*) sought from a *pīr.*[110] The upper class Muslims and the religious section of the community wore beards of a distinctive cut, after the fashion of their counterparts in Persia and Central Asia. It was the custom among the Muslims to have their head shaved off as bald as the coot.[111] The Hindu preferred to have a clean path way about four inches wide cut down the centre of his scalp from forehead to neck, except the place where his top knot sprouted, which was left long enough for him to tie in a knot or two.[112] The lock of hair on his head (known as *chaugh*) was one of the conspicuous hallmarks of a Pandit's quest to be distinguishable from Muslims and others.

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[99] *Daughters of Vitasta*, op. cit., p. 198.

[100] *Dastūr al- Sālikīn*, Vol.1, p. 182, II. p. 400.

[101] Ibid., II, p. 394.

[102] Lawrence, op. cit., p. 252.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] *Dastūr al-Sālikīn*, op. cit., I, pp. 166-67.

[107] Lawrence, op. cit., p.252; Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p.132.

[108] Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 140.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Lawrence, p. 233.

[111] *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*, (text) p. 305; Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p.131.

Perhaps nothing explains the acme of Pandit community's separative mentality more than their rejection of the dishes introduced by the Muslims from Persia and Central Asia. Though the Kashmiri Pandits were meat eaters, curiously enough, they did not adopt the sumptuous dishes introduced by the Muslims. They strictly adhered to their own method of cookery – the attitude, which they maintain down to our own times. Thus, while the Kashmiri Muslims prepare some special dishes on weddings and other festive occasions, nothing of that sort is cooked by the Hindus. Their meat dishes like *kaliya, machh* and *tsuk tsarwan* have no comparison with the exemplary tasty curries as *kabāb, rista, roganjosh, methi māz, qurma, tabaq, Yakhni,* etc., collectively called *Kashmiri wazawān*. As a matter of fact, the contemporary *brāhmana* leadership vehemently opposed taking the dishes introduced by the Muslims, believing that the adoption of any aspect of Muslim culture would initiate the process of conversion to Islam.[113] It is no wonder, then, that even in the preparation of the common vegetable dish viz., *hāk* (knol-kohl), the pattern of cooking varied between the two communities, the preparation of the Pandits being proverbial for being little spicy and, therefore, tasteless. The Hindus used only turmeric, asafetida, oil and salt in the preparation of curries. No other spice, nor garlic and onion were used.[114] The Muslims had no abhorrence for any spice or vegetable except asafetida, which was never used.[115] The Pandits also did not eat tame fowls and tame ducks and their eggs. Red tomatoes, red fleshed Kabuli, vegetable marrow, red carrots, red beans and red apples were an abomination to the Kashmiri Pandits.[116] The Muslims had no such taboo.

It is also interesting to note that the cooking pots and other utensils of the two communities were clearly distinguishable. While the Muslims used tinned copper cooking and eating vessels,[117] the Hindus

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[112] Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 131.

[113] Śuka, p.380.

[114] Lawrence, op. cit., p.300.

[115] Madan, *Religious Ideology and Social Structure*, op. cit., p.52.

[116] Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 254, 300; Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p.265.

[117] Ujfalvy, *L'art des Cuivres Anciens au Cachemere et au Petit Thibet*, p. 26. Vide Mohibbul Hasan, p. 264.

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did not cook their food in any thing else but brass utensils; they ate off brass dishes and drank out of brass cups.[118] ~~The poor Muslims~~ generally used earthen utensils and the well-to-do used china cups.[119] ~~However~~, if the Pandits used earthenware or china cups, they could only use them once and then would throw them away as defiled and not fit to be cleaned.[120] Even the material of the vase of *hookah* (*jajeer*) of the two communities varied. The vase of the Pandit's *hookah* was made of brass and that of the Mussalman either of tinned copper or of earthenware. The styles and patterns of the household utensils were also distinctive as the Pandits refused to adopt the new utensils and new designs introduced by the Muslims from Persia and Central Asia. Of the new utensils and styles which became all the fashion among upper class Muslims, mention may be made of floral rosette designed *aftaba* (water pot), *tasht* (ewer) shield *surāhī* (a long necked flask) and *qand kārī* bowl. Even the eating utensils like *sa'kh* and *tour* remained confined to Muslims, the Pandits eating from a differently styled plate. There can be perhaps no other best example of the Pandit's stubborn attitude against adopting the new culture than their rejection to use the *tasht* and *surāhī*, the most beautiful and, much more, the most convenient means of providing water on the occasion of feasts for washing hands. The style of the vases and pipes of *hookahs* of Muslims and Pandits also presented a marked contrast.[121]

The house of a Kashmiri Pandit was also characterized by certain external signs and marks which singled it out from Muslim houses. Madan brings out the distinguishing marks of a Pandit house. "In all Pandit houses, the *wuz* (the long narrow passage in each storey of the house after one enters by the main door) ~~and the~~ steps leading to it are scrubbed every morning, except during periods of mourning, with brown earth and water. Therefore, a pot with brown earth and water in it was always to be found near the steps which led into a house".[122] Red vermilion marks on the main door leading into a house were an indication of its Pandit residence.[123] "An examination of the door-frame would reveal in some crevice a few stalks of *darbha* (*poa cynosuroides*), a jungle grass greatly prized by Brāhmans all over India

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118 Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 103.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.

121 This holds good even today.

122 Madan, *Family and Kinship*, p. 46.

123 Ibid.

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as a purifying agent and charm against evil spirits."[124] Various types of flowers, particularly marigolds, commonly called *bhattapōsh* (the flowers of *Bhattas*) in the kitchen gardens and their wreaths hanging from pegs under the eves were yet another unmistakable signs of a Pandit house.[125] The Pandit house was also distinguishable by floral patterns and other symbols painted on its facade.[126] The newly constructed house of a Kashmiri Pandit had also an old and broken earthenware pot slung from one of its projecting beams 'to keep off the evil eye'.[127]

An important feature of the Kashmiri Pandit homestead was the *Thākur-kuth* (God's room). The *Thākur-kuth* was a room set apart in the house for religious rites and worship.[128] Yet another distinguishing feature of the Pandit house was that the hearth was necessarily to be scrubbed by cow-dung, for the cow was their sacred animal.[129]

Although both Hindus and Muslims spoke *Kōshur* (Kashmiri) and even if the Hindus learnt Persian, the *Kōshur* spoken by each community was marked by some striking differences of lexical elements. While the Kashmiri spoken by the Hindus retained many Sanskrit words and terms, the Muslims used their Persian or Arabic forms.[130] Some of the particular words and terms to which the Kashmiri Hindus and Kashmiri Muslims have stuck to this day differently as their respective lexical markers of boundary maintenance device are given below:

Words spoken by Pandits	**Words spoken by Muslims**
Siriya (sun)	Aftāb
Pap (sin)	Gunāh
Dharam (religion)	Mazhab
Shukurwar (friday)	Jummah
Pooza (worship)	'Ibādat
Prān (soul)	Rooh
Po'n (water)	Āb
Chulah (hearth)	Dhān
Chokh (kitchen)	Dhan kuth

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[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 107

[128] Madan, *Family and Kinship*, op. cit; p 41.

[129] Tyndale Biscoe, op. cit., p. 265.

[130] See B.B. Kachru, *A Reference Grammar of Kashmiri*, pp. 21-27.

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Buhgun (cooking pot)	Patila
Khos (cup)	Piala
Nichuk (hell)	Jahnam
Sarug (heaven)	Jannat
Kak'in (brother's wife)	Kāk ded.

Even at the level of folklore, the two communities maintained their respective distinctiveness. *Wanwun* – song sung in chorus by women at the time of marriages – is sung by both the communities, but their respective religious beliefs drew a sharp line between them, both in content and in the mode of singing. Each community used its own religious idioms and symbols in the composition of *wanwun*, and hence stood offish.[131] What is more, the modes of singing *wanwun* stand at complete variance with each other. The Muslims sing it in high tune and short form; but the Hindus do the quite opposite of it. Their respective wedding and funeral gatherings are also distinctive.

So particular were they to distinguish themselves from one another that while the Muslims invariably mounted their ponies from the off side, the Pandits mounted them from the near side.[132] And while the former performed their ablutions from the left leg, the latter invariably began from the right hand. It is also interesting to note that while the Kashmiri Pandit, without any mistake, blows his nose with the right hand, the Kashmiri Muslim does it with the left one.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Hindus and Muslims greeted one another with *salām*, no Muslim would say: *asalam-u-alaikum* (God's blessings to you) to a Hindu and no Hindu would say *namaskār* (I bow to thee) to a Muslim, for each considered it improper for reasons of the images they had of one another.[133]

Having identified the markers of separate religious identities maintained by the two communities, so as not to be mistaken as the other, it is, however, interesting to observe that both had, in the words of Madan, "two sets of representation, one stemming from ideological considerations and the other from the compulsions of living".[134] Although at the ideological level the Kashmiri Pandits considered the Muslims *mlecchas* whose touch was polluting and whose culture was a sum total of 'blamable practices',[135] nevertheless for preserving their

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[131] For details, see S.N. Pandit, *Kashiren Battan Hindi Rasam Ta Revaj*.

[132] Lawrence, op. cit., p. 252.

[133] See also Madan, *Religious Ideology and Social Structure*, p.50.

[134] Ibid., p.58.

[135] Śrivara, p. 320.

brāhmana identity, they had no other alternative but to give concession to the circumstances. For instance, it was not possible for the *brāhmanas* to maintain their traditional official position unless they learnt the language of the court and administration that changed from Sanskrit to Persian. Ultimately, they had to make the best of 'a bad job'. They not only learnt the new language but also achieved mastery in it.[136] Similarly, for preserving their status, it was imperative for the *brāhmanas* to seek the company of the Muslim rulers and to work shoulder to shoulder with them. And here, too, they showed no obstinacy to bend the caste rules.[137] Ideally, the touch of a Muslim was polluting, but the Kashmiri Hindus, who were exclusively *brāhmanas*, needed goods and services which only the Muslim occupational groups, namely, farmers, milkmen, butchers, barbers, midwives, potters, shopkeepers, etc., could provide, forcing them to be down to earth rather than idealists.[138] Madan has succinctly described the concession to the exigencies of existence made by the otherwise "pure" *brāhmanas*:

> It is obvious that Pandits have accepted compromise to avoid being defeated. They are faced with a moral dilemma: to preserve their status as Brāhmans they need goods and services which only the Muslims provide, but the latter are themselves a source of pollution. Since the danger emanating from Muslim can be controlled and rectified, the Pandits' choice has its merits. A Pandit saying is apposite in this context: *yath na push tath na dush* (whereof one is helpless, thereof one is blameless). This may be regarded as evidence of Pandit pragmatism; in Dumont's phrase, a concession to coexistence.[139]

The same is true of the Muslims also whose relations with the Pandits were guided by practical considerations rather than by the theoretical postulates. They could not ignore, save to their disadvantage, the special knowledge of the Pandit official class especially their expertise in revenue administration. And no wonder that we find the agrarian administration being almost exclusively manned by the Pandits throughout the period Muslims ruled

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[136] Śrivara, pp. 136, 146. For details, see Abdal Qādir Sarwarī, *Kashmīr Main Fārsī Adab Kī Tārīkh*.

[137] Jonarāja, pp. 83, 97; *Tuhfat al-Ahbāb*, p. 69.

[138] For details, see Madan, op cit., pp. 42-47.

[139] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

Kashmir.[140] More importantly, the Muslim occupational groups supplied the Hindus with all kinds of services and goods to the extent of making idols for them[141] and cremating their dead.[142] At the popular level religious differences never jeopardized the harmonious relations between the two communities. It is only at the political level that at times the mutual toleration of each other's beliefs and value systems was vitiated. But overall tolerance has remained the corner stone of inter-communal relations in Kashmir. This is why, "Even now, after braving storms of centuries, the usages, laws and institutions of the Kashmiri Brahmins are the same as they were ages ago."[143]

However, the fact remains that the separate religio-cultural distinctiveness retained by each community accounted for the existence of the two identities – Kashmiri Hindu identity and Kashmiri Muslim identity[144] – with far reaching consequences on the life and conditions of both the communities besides shaping the subsequent history of Kashmir. Given these two sets of opposite cultural and attitudinal streams, it is difficult to agree with the recently coined term *Kashmiriyat* which erroneously conveys the impression of the absence of cultural pluralism and its consequent fall out in Kashmir.

Also, it is perhaps important to mention here that the two communities behaved more like ethnic groups than following the spirit of their respective religions, each, however, with emphasis on righteous conduct by controlling carnal self.[145] While both the communities have been particular to maintain mutually incompatible cultural markers, neither showed equal zeal (exceptions apart) in imbibing the altruistic values of its religion, which could help in cementing the bonds instead of intensifying the cleavage. The hollow rituals, customs and identity markers ended up in dividing the society into two vested interest social divisions only to suffer in rotation. The avowed proclivity shown by the Muslim and Hindu rulers towards the members of their respective communities sharpened communal consciousness, each aspiring for a political establishment of its credo. The division of Indian-subcontinent on the basis of religious geography accentuated the feeling beyond precedent.

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[140] *Tuhfat al- Ahbab*, p. 69; R. K. Parmu, *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, p.352 and note 6.

[141] Madan, op cit., pp. 46-47.

[142] The practice continues unabated till date.

[143] Anand Koul, p. 9. It is actually in the context of projecting Kashmiri *brahmanas* as 'martyrs' of their religion that Anand Koul highlights the continuity of their customs and beliefs. However, it needs no mention that if the Muslim rulers had not been tolerant towards the Hindu faith during their four hundred and eighty years' rule of Kashmir, it would not have been possible for the Hindus to maintain their usages, laws and institutions.

[144] This is also the conclusion of T.N. Madan. See his *Religious Ideology and Social Structure*, op.cit.

[145] Not only the Qur'ān, Hadith and the Sufi literature emphasise controlling *nafs* as a pre- requisite for attaining the way to Allah, the *Bhattil* (the *Bhatta* way of life), also enjoins the *Bhattas* "to exercise patience and restraint (*ched*), and to be ever prepared to resist the compulsions of bodily appetites until assured of their proper satisfaction as defined in *bhattil*." Madan, *Family and Kinship*, op. cit., p. 244.

Appendix-I

Leading Persian and Central Asian Sūfīs who worked as missionaries in Kashmir

Name	Silsila	Time of arrival	Place of settlement	Remarks
Sayyid Sharaf al-Dīn (Bulbul Shāh)	Suhrawardī	Sometime between 1301-1320	Bulbul Lankar, Srinagar	The first known Sūfī to set foot in the Valley
Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn	Kubravī	Sometime between 1354-73	Shihāmpūr, Srinagar	*Murīd* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī.
Sayyid Hasan	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Yūsuf	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Husain Simnānī	-do-	-do-	Kulgām	-do-
Sayyid Haidar	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī	-do-	1384	Left the Valley after completing his missionary sojourn	The *pīr* of Kubrāvīs in Kashmir. He was accompanied by seven hundred *murīds*.
Sayyid Jamal al-Dīn 'Atta'ī	-do-	-do-	Chattar, Baramulla	*Murīd* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī. According to Sayyid 'Ali, the saint settled in the village along with one hundred Sayyids, Sūfīs and *murīds*.
Sayyid Kamāl	-do-	-do-	Qutub al-Dīnpūra, Srinagar	*Murīd* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī.
Sayyid Kamāl	-do-	-do-	Nāid Khai, Sonawārī	-do-
Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Ārwat, Srinagar	-do-
Sayyid Fīrūz	-do-	-do-	Sempūra, near Pampōr	-do-

Sayyid Kāzim	-do-	-do-	Cetapūra, near Awantipūra	-do-
Sayyid Rukun al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Āwanpūra, near Awantipūra.	-do-
Sayyid Fakhar al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Quraishī	-do-	-do-	Bijbehara	-do-
Sayyid Abdallāh	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Murād	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Ahmad Quraishī	-do-	-do-	Litar, near Pulwāma.	-do-
Pīr Muhammad Qārī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i-Sultān Qutub al-Dīn, near Sarāf Kadal, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Dedar, *pargana* Kruhin. (Sayyid 'Ali however, calls the village by the name of Walab)	-do-
Sayyid J'afar	-do-	-do-	Ārahōm, *pargana* Lār	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Baihaqī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Khwāja Yārbal, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Kabīr Baihaqī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar. (buried in Khwāja Bazār, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Mohammad 'Ainpoosh	-do-	-do-	Kanikadal, Srinagar	-do-
Sayyid Bahā' al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Ārhōme, Shopian	-do-
Sayyid N'iamat Allāh	-do-	-do-	Pāmpōr	-do-
Sayyid Shihāb al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mailkpūra, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i- Pīr Hāji Muhammad Qārī, Srinagar	-do-
Sayyid Ahmad	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-

Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Qāziyār, near Zainakadal, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Sirāj	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Nandapūra, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Mantaqī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Chechabal/ modern Chattabal, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Khalīl	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Maulana Muhammad Sarāyī	-do-	-do-	Left along with his *pīr*, Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī	-do-
Shaikh Qawām al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Khwāja Ishāq Khatlānī	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Hisārī	-do-	Around 1389-90	Sikandarpur, Srinagar	He headed a group of *murīds* who accompanied him to Kashmir (Sayyid 'Ali, f10b)
Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī	-do-	1391	Left the valley after staying there for twelve years.	He was the son of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī and headed a mission comprising his three hundred disciples.
Sayyid Ahmad Sāmānī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried near Fateh Kadal)	*Murīd* of Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī
Sayyid Muhammad Khāwarī	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Qāzī Husain Shīrāzī	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-

Sayyid 'Alā' al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Iskandarpūra, Berwah	-do-
Sayyid Fakhar al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Tāj al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Bukhārī	-do-	Around 1391-92	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i- Salāṭīn, Srinagar)	He came to Kashmir along with a group of sayyids and *ulamā'*
Sayyid 'Ali Akbar	-do-	1390's	Srinagar (buried in *mohalla* Tāshwān, Srinagar	He also headed a mission and is famous for his distinguished services to Islam. (Sayyid 'Ali, f.12a)
Sayyid Muhammad Kirmānī	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried near Zaina Kadal)	
Sayyid Muhammad Madanī	-do-	-do-	First settled at village Malah Mōb, *pargana* Bāngil, then at Rainawārī, Srinagar and subsequently at Nawshahr at the request of Zain al-'Ābidīn	
Sayyid *Zirak*	-do-	1391	Kandah Hamah, Berwah.	*Murīd* of Sayyid Muhammad Hamdānī
Sayyid Muhammad Habīb	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i-Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn, Srinagar)	-do-
Shaikh Fakhr al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Newah	-do-
Shaikh 'Abdallāh	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Andarwārī, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Hājī Muhammad	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Rainawārī)	-do-

Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn Muhammad	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Husain Mantaqī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i-Salāṭīn, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Hasan Mantaqī	-do-	-do-	Awantipūra	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Lūristānī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried near Jami' Masjid)	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Isfahānī (famous as Sayyid Jānbāz)	-do-	-do-	Baramulla	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Afzal	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Naushahr, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Habīb	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid 'Alī Akbar	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Maisuma, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Khalīl	-do-	-do-	Sadrahbal, near Hazratbal	-do-
Sayyid Kamāl al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Chattabal, Srinagar	-do-
Sayyid Habīb-Allāh	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Naushahr, Srinagar)	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali	-do-	-do-	Naupūra, Srinagar.	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad Wali	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Muhammad	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Hilāl	Naqashbandī	1390's	'Asham, Sonawārī.	
Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Mantaqī (commonly known as Wuni Sa'b in Kashmir)	-do-	-do-	First in village 'Asham and then in Srinagar (buried in 'Ālikadal, Srinagar)	

Sayyid Haidar al-Dīn	Kubravī	1390's	Srinagar (buried in Zaina Kadal, Srinagar)
Sayyid Husain Baladrūmī	-do-	late 14th or beginning of the 15th century	Srinagar
Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	-do-
Bābā Hājī Adham	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Hājī Murād	-do-	-do-	Kruri, Baramulla
Sayyid Habīb Kāshānī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i-Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn, Srinagar)
Sayyid Muhammad Marvazī	-do-	-do-	Chattabal, Srinagar
Sayyid Muhammad Habīb Sarkhābī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Kāwdāra, Srinagar)
Sayyid Shihāb al-Dīn	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Zaina Kadal, Srinagar)
Sayyid Hazīr	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Husain	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Mūsa	-do-	-do-	Parvah, pargana Bāngil.
Sayyid Zulufqār	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Ja'far	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Afzal	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Ma'sūm	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Qāsim	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Dā'ūd	-do-	-do-	-do-

Sayyid Qāsim	-do-	-do-	Nilahgōm, *pargana* Bāngil
Sayyid Muhammad Bukharī	-do-	-do-	Kralapūra, *pargana* Bāngil
Sayyid Khalīl	-do-	-do-	*Pargana* Bāngil
Sayyid Jaʿfar	-do-	-do-	Rāwalpūra, near Srinagar
Sayyid Muhammad Marʿaqī Thānī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in *mohalla* Tāshwān, Srinagar)
Sayyid Jalīl Kāshānī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in the locality stretching between *mohalla* Bozagarān and *mohalla* Chattabal of medieval Srinagar)
Sayyid Muhammad	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid ʿUmar	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid ʿAli	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Kāzim	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Murād	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Jaʿfar	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Mād	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Husain	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Zulufqār	-do-	-do-	Buried in and around Nūrbagh, Srinagar.
Sayyid ʿAli	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid ʿAbdallāh	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Qāsim	-do-	-do-	-do-
Sayyid Husain	-do-	-do-	-do-

Sayyid Ibrāhīm	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Sayyid Shahnawāz	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Sayyid Ishāq	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Sayyid Ismā'īl	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Sayyid Fīrūz	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Sayyid Barkhurdār	-do-	Late fifteenth century	Dandah Mazar, Srinagar	
Shaikh Shamas al-Dīn Baghdādī	-do-	-do-	Zainapūra	
Sayyid Ja'far	-do-	-do-	Rāwalpūra, near Srinagar.	A'zam Dedamarī says that there was a house at village Garnind, *pargana* Bīrwā, which was associated with the name of Sayyid Ja'far. According to the chronicler it was perhaps meant for his residence.
Mīr Shamas al-Dīn 'Irāqī	Nūrbakhshī	-do-	Jadibal, Srinagar	He is the founder of Nūrbakhshiyya order in Kashmir. He was accompanied by a large group of his disciples
Sayyid Ahmar		Early 16th century	Pul-i-Duyārān, outside the city	
Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Bukhārī	Suhrawardī	Late sixteenth century	After staying in the Valley for sometime he left for India.	

Sayyid Nasir al-Dīn Khānyārī		-do-	Khānyār, Srinagar	
Maulana Muhammad 'Ainī		-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i-Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn).	
Sayyid Ahmad Kirmānī	Suhrawardī	Late sixteenth century	Srinagar	He was one of the *pīrs* of Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm. Although he had his Khānaqāh at Srinagar in *mohalla* Narwarah, he took extensive missionary sojourn around the Valley as is evident from some symbolic tombs existing in different parts of the Valley. Two of them are near Srinagar on the Srinagar-Baramulla Highway and another at Nowdal (Tral). He is buried in Mazār-i Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn, situated on the slopes of Kōh-i Mārān, Srinagar.
Sayyid Ni'mat-allāh Shāh Qādirī	Qādirī	-do-	Left after staying for sometime	Founder of Qādirī order in Kashmir.
Shaikh Mīrak Mīr	-do-	-do-	Mallaratta, Srinagar	
Mīr Nāzuk	-do-	-do-	Qāzikadal, Srinagar.	

Appendix-II

Some reputed Kashmiri Kubrāvī and Suhrawardī Sūfīs

Name	Silsila	Period	Place of settlement	Remarks
Shaikh Sulaimān	Kubrāvī	Late fourteenth century	Srinagar (buried in Mazār-i-Sayyid Muhammad Lūristanī, near Jami'Masjid Srinagar).	He was a *brāhmana* convert who subsequently became the *murīd* of Sayyid 'Ali Hamdānī
Shaikh Ahmad Khwush-khwān	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Shaikh Sultān Muhammad Kashmiri	-do-	Fifteenth century	Srinagar, near Takht-i-Sulaimān.	Left for Pakhli, his home place, towards the end of his life and is buried there.
Shaikh Bahā' al-Dīn, popularly known as Ganjbakhsh (bestower of treasures)	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried at Srinagar in what is known as Mazār-i-Ganjbakhsh)	
Bābā Uthmān Ganāī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Mazar-i-Sālatīn, Srinagar)	
Hāfiz Fatha Allāh Khwsh-khwān	-do-	-do-	Srinagar	
Bābā Isma'il	-do-	-do-	Srinagar	
Bābā Fatha Allāh	-do-	Early sixteenth century	Srinagar. He left for Siālkot towards the end of his life and is buried there	

Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm	Suhrawardī	Sixteenth century	Srinagar	He revived the Suhrawardī order in Kashmir which dominated the religious scene of Kashmir from the second half of the sixteenth century.
Shaikh Ahmad Qārī	-do-	-do-	Srinagar	
Shaikh Ya'qūb Sarfī	Kubrāvī	-do-	-do-	
Habīb Allāh Hubbi Naushahrī	-do-	-do-	-do-	
Bābā Dā'ūd Khākī	Suhrawardī	-do-	-do-	*Khalīfa* of Shaikh Hamzah
Maulāna Shamas al- Dīn Pāl	-do-	-do-	Srinagar	According to *Waqi'at-i-Kashmir*, he left for Ka'aba towards the end of his life and is buried somewhere near Ka'aba
Khwāja Tāhir Rafīq	-do-	-do-	Srinagar (buried in Fatha Kadal, Srinagar)	
Khwāja Hasan Qārī	-do-	-do-	Shiva, *pargana* Zainagīr.	
Kawāja Ishāq Qārī	-do-	-do-	-do-	According to *W'aqat-i-Kashmir* he is buried somewhere in Makka where he had gone to perform *hajj* and passed away there
Shaikh Hasan	-do-	-do-	Chandapūra. *pargana* Khewurpara.	
Shaikh Bahrām Gurtangī	-do-	-do-	Gurtangoo. Kamraj.	
Shaikh Haidar Lārī	-do-	-do-	Tulamula, *pargana* Lār.	
Shaikh Bāyazid Shumnāgī	-do-	-do-		

Appendix-III
Prominent Rīshis of Kashmir

Name	Place of birth	Time	Centre of activity	Remarks
Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn	Kaimuh	Fifteenth century	Malapūr (*pargana* Bīruh) for twelve years, Driyagōm for twelve years and finally in the jungle of Chrār where he also lies buried.	He is the founder of Rīshī Movement
Bābā Zain al-Dīn	Kishtwar	-do-	'Aish Muqām (in the modern district of Anantnag).	He was converted by Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn to Islam and became one of his immediate disciples.
Bābā Bām al-Dīn	Bumazū	-do-	Bumazū, near 'Aish Muqām.	-do-
Bābā Latīf al-Dīn	Somewhere in *pargana* Maru-Ādvin	-do	First at Uttar and finally at Pōshkar	-do-
Bābā Nasīr al-Dīn	Sāzipūr, *pargana* Yech	-do-	Chrār	He succeeded Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn as head of the Rishis at Chrār.
Bābā Qaiyām al-Dīn		-do-	Managōm, *pargana* Devsar	He was one of the immediate disciples of Shaikh Nūr al-Dīn.

Shams al-Dīn	Maru-Wardwan	Fifteenth-Sixteenth century	First at Krur, *pargana* Kuthār and then at Tarigōm, *pargana* Devsar	Disciple of Bābā Bām al-Dīn
Hanīf al-Dīn Haidar	Akhāl, *pargana* Lār	-do-	First at Yār, *pargana* Lār and then at Akhāl. However, towards the end of his life he settled at Yār and is buried there.	-do-
Rajab al-Dīn		-do-	Nāganaran, *pargana* Martand.	-do-
Naurōz Rishi		Sixteenth century	-do-	Disciple of Rajab al- Dīn
Hardī Rishī		-do-	-do-	Disciple of Naurōz Rishī
Nandī Rīshī		Sixteenth – Seventeenth century	-do-	Disciple of Hardī Rishī
Bābā Hājī		Seventeenth century	-do-	Disciple of Nandī Rishī
Payām al-Dīn	Chandnu, *pargana* Lār	Fifteenth century	In the forest of Ranbūh, *pargana* Bāngil	Disciple of Bābā Zain al-Dīn
Umar Thākur		Sixteenth century	'Aīsh Muqām	-do-
Shamas al-Dīn		-do-	-do-	-do-
Ladha Mal Rīshī	*Pargana* Kamraj	-do-	Sharkōt and buried in Handwānpura, *pargana* Hamāl	-do-
Hanīf al-Dīn		-do-	Mountains of Dāra, *pargana* Manchahōm	-do-

Daryā al-Dīn		-do-	Rānyil, *pargana* Phāk	-do-
Langar Mal		-do-	Buried in Handwānpura	Disciple of Ladi Mal
Bibī Gangā		-do-	-do-	Woman Rīshī
Shukur al-Dīn	Arat, *pargana* Manchahōm	-do-	First at Shankpal and then at Sherkoot where he lies buried	Disciple of Zain al-Dīn
Daryā Rīshī	Wanarkhan, *pargana* Uttar	Fifteenth century	Sherkot	Disciple of Shakur al-Din
Rigī Rīshī		Fifteenth-Sixteenth century	-do-	Disciple of Daryā Rīshī
Rūpī Rīshī		Sixteenth century	-do-	Disciple of Regi Rīshī
Bibī Shangā	Kachalwan	Fifteenth-Sixteenth century	Āham, *pargana* Khuyahom	Woman disciple of Shukur al-Dīn
Nikī Rīshī		Sixteenth century	-do-	Disciple of Bibī Shanga
Nauroz Rīshī	*Pargana* Khuyahōm	-do-	-do-	Disciple of Neki Rishi
Pīr Bāz	Razwān, *pargana* Achha	Fifteenth century	Uttar	Disciple of Latif al-Dīn
Ladī Kūtur		-do-	Chachilōm, *pargana* Zainagir	-do-
Lachham Rīshī		-do-	Pōshkar	-do-
Ladī Ganai		-do-	Junarpal	Disciple of Latif al-Dīn

Nūrī Rīshī	Lulipūra, *pargana* Bīru	-do-	Lūlipūra	-do-
Bahrām Rīshī		Sixteenth century	-do-	Disciple of Nūrī Rīshī
Malik Jōgī Raina		Fifteenth century	Chrār	Disciple of Bābā Nasir al-Dīn
Lōlī Rīshī	Charu, *pargana* Ādvan	-do-	-do-	-do-
Rūbī Rīshī	Lajura, *pargana* Chhirath	-do-	-do-	Disciple of Lōlī Rīshī
Zainu Rīshī		Sixteenth century	-do-	Disciple of Rūbī Rīshī
Gangā Rīshī		Sixteenth century	Chrār	Disciple of Zainu Rīshī
Mūrī Rīshī		-do-	-do-	-do-
Hardī Rīshī Bābā		Sixteenth century	Islāmābād (Anantnag)	He became the disciple of Shaikh Hamzah Makhdūm but without completely parting the way with the Rīshī path
Rīshī Bābā		-do-	Bijbihāra	Disciple of Hardī Rīshī
Rūpī Bābā Rīshī		-do-	Srinagar (buried in Habba Kadal)	Disciple of Shaikh Hamzah
Kangī Rīshī		-do-	Wanigām, *pargana* Bāngil	

Appendix-IV

Famous Khānaqāhs of the Sultanate Period

Name of the Khānaqāh	Silsila	Location
Khānaqāh-i Saiyid Sharf al-Dīn Bulbul Shāh	Suhrawardī	Bulbul Langar, Srinagar.
Khānaqāh-i Saiyid Husain Simnānī	Kubrāvī	Kulgam
Khānaqāh-i Mu'alla	Kubrāvī	Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i A'lā	Kubrāvī	Tral
Khānaqāh-i Wāiā	Kubrāvī	Wachhī, Pargana, Shawura
Khānaqāh-i Bijbehara	Kubrāvī	Bijbehara
Khānaqāh-i Sopōr	Kubrāvī	Sopōr
Khānaqāh-i Drugjan	Kubrāvī	Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i Saiyid Barkhurdār	Kubrāvī	Dana Mazar, Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i Shaikh al 'Ālam	Rishi	Charar-i Sharīf
Khānaqāh-i Kubrāvī	Kubrāvī	Mattan
Khānaqāh-i Faiz Panah	Naqashbandī	Asham, Sonawārī
Khānaqāh-i Sayyid Muhammad Madanī	Kubrāvī	Srinagar

Khānaqāh-i Jalāl al- Dīn Thākur	Kubrāvī	Gojwara, Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i Malik Ahmad Yetū	Kubrāvī	Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i Shamas Chak	Kubrāvī	Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i Bābā Isma ‘īl	Kubrāvī	Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i Zadībal	Nūrbakhshī	Srinagar
Khānaqāh-i Saiyid Ahmad Kirmānī	Suhrawardī	Narwar, Srinagar

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